Truckin'

FEBRUARY 1978
VOLUME 4, NO. 2

TRM PUBLICATIONS

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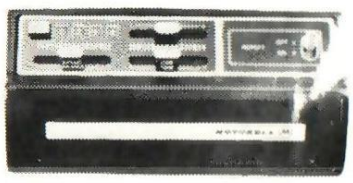

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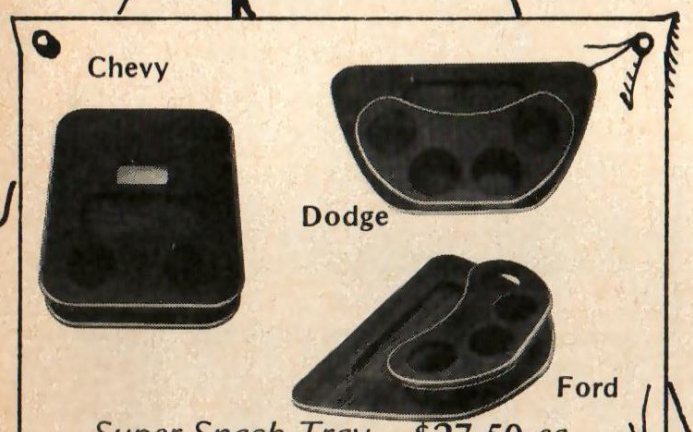

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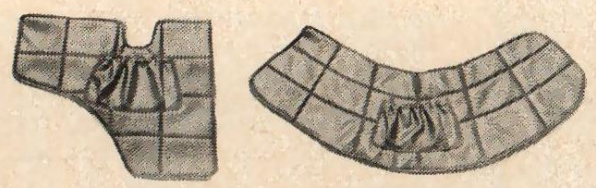

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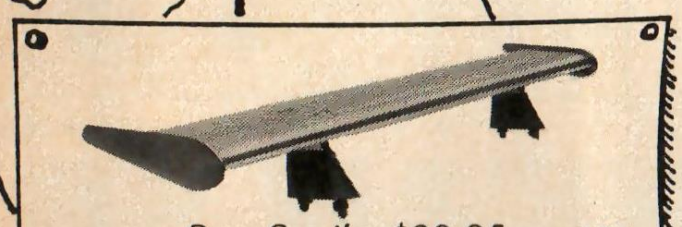

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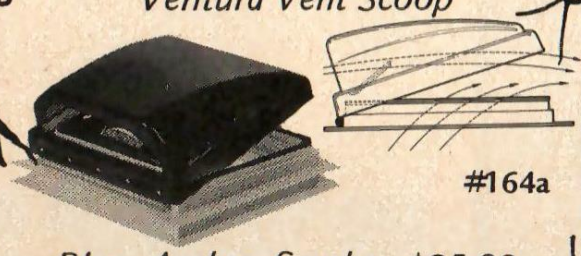

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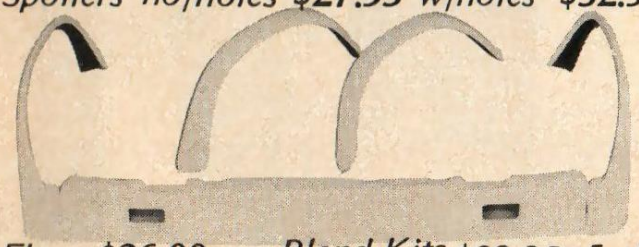

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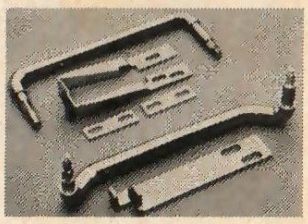

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FEBRUARY 1978/VOLUME 4, NO. 2

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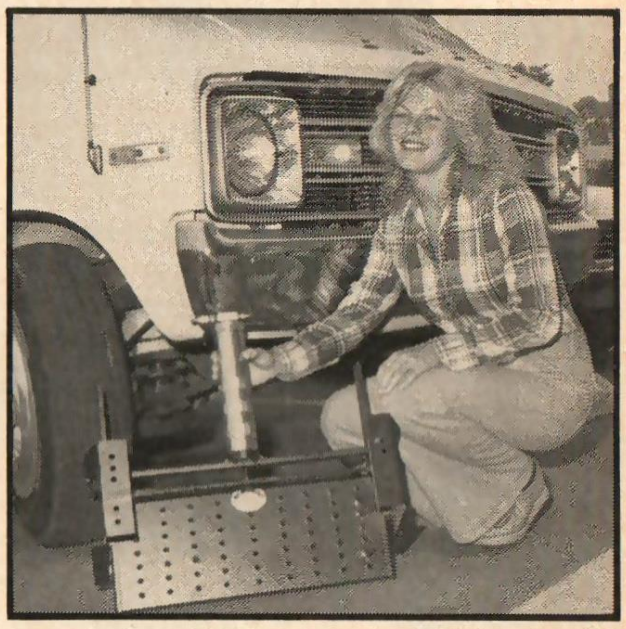
COVER: This month's feature shots consists of Ed Lozano's "I'm Easy" early Chevy van, Greg of Akron's "Mini Eagle" (with model Poki), and the Low Mfg. off-road Datsun racer. The late model Chevy, and we do mean model, was built by our associate editor, Pat Ganahl. Photos by Steve Coonan, Terry Bergdorf, Robert K. Smith, Pat Ganahl, respectively.



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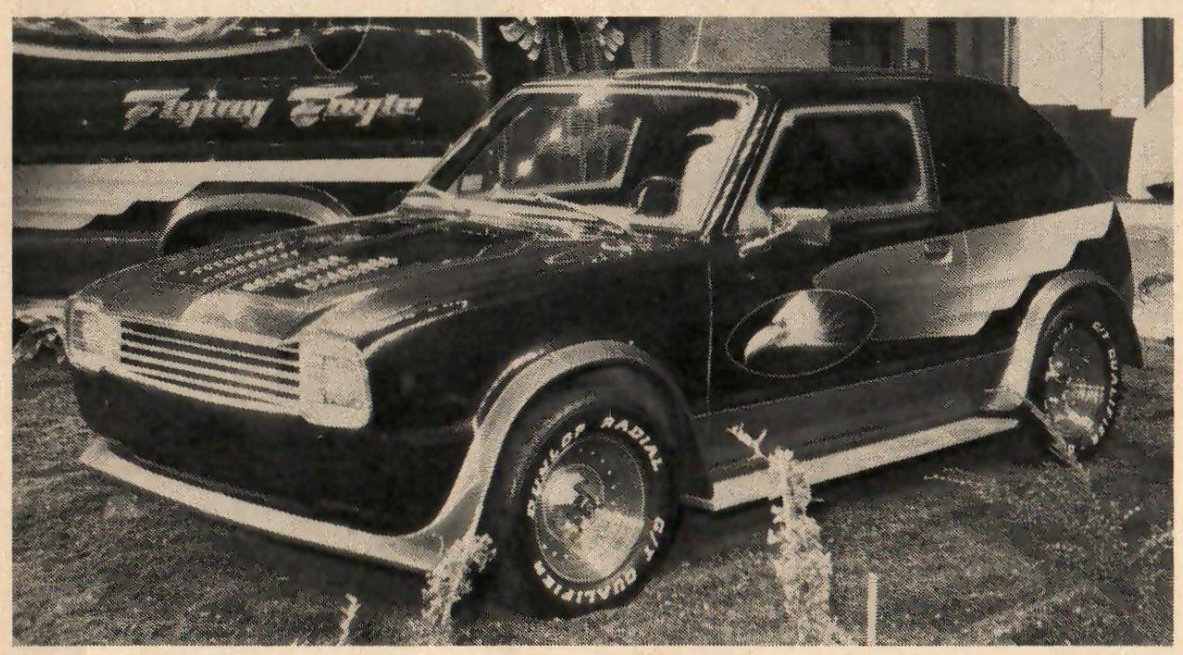
editorial

by Robert K. Smith



It's show season again, and you know what that means. Yep, spit and polish for trophies, and in some cases, for money. And with each new season, we see a good selection of new and trick vans and trucks. So as we check out a show or happening, we'll try to let you in on the latest tricks in custom vehicles.

If a van or truck is exceptional and wins a lot of goodies at various shows, this vehicle's owner is usually called upon to make more show appearances. Instead of competing though, this trick truck becomes a feature vehicle to help promote the show, and therefore get more spectators to come to the show and check it out. With some of the bigger shows, the show promoter tries to get five or more feature vehicles from different parts of the country. And the promoter pays the truck owner in the neighborhood of from $500 to $1500, depending on quality of vehicle and how far the truck owner has to travel.

So shows aren't just spit and polish and trophies. Some people are in it for the money. One guy who has made money from shows is Greg of Akron. He built some outrageous vans, and went for the trophies in the beginning. But now, show promoters are inviting him to shows with the Flying Eagle vans and his latest the Mini Eagle (featured in this issue). And they pay good bucks too. Greg's business cards tells it like it is, "We're only in it for the Money!" Greg says trophies are okay but the green stuff is what's happening.

So if you have a trick truck or van, there's one way to get paid back for your initial expenses during construction. Or is it really that neat? I know a few people who were invited to shows, Greg included, and the show promoter would pay them to show their feature vehicles. They paid all right, but with rubber checks. What a bummer! These owners took time off from work, spent many hours detailing their machines, and got ripped off. What can they do about it? Spend more money to sue the promoter and take more time off to try to collect their bucks? It's not really worth it if you ask me.

I'm not saying all show promoters are rip-off artists. I know of two who have pulled this stunt over the past six months though, so if you're approached by a promoter to show your vehicle as a feature, beware. Usually the promoter will pay half before you make it to the show, and by the end of the show, he will pay you the other half. And he usually pays with a check. The best thing to do is get cash though, because you never know if that promoter will put a stop payment on the check if the show didn't make any money.

The crew from Yosemite Sam's in Detroit make it a point to get cash on move-in day. And if they don't get any cooperation, well, they have their ways. They went to a couple of shows where other feature vehicle owners received elastic checks. They even got one, but had it cashed before heading home. I'm glad they got their money, and so is the promoter.

If you plan to try out the show circuit, be cautious at all times, especially when it comes to getting paid for your feature vehicle. Why go to all the the trouble of displaying at a show, and then get ripped off?

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READERS RAP

5-LUG WHEELS INSTEAD OF 6

I've noticed in many of your magazines that some of the early '60-'66 Chevy pickups have 5-lug rims. Being that all these model Chevy pickups come with 6-lug wheels, I would be very interested in knowing how to change the lug pattern to 5-lug. Do these guys use adapters or is there a better way to convert a 6-lug to a 5-lug and still use Chevy 5-lug rims? I am considering putting Chevy ralley sport rims on my '65 stepside. Any information would be greatly appreciated!

Bubba Casey
Mt. Enterprise, Texas

Editor's Note: The best way to convert a 6-lug to 5-lug is to remove the wheel studs and relocate them according to your specs. This can be done at an automotive machine shop. Adapters are another method but are not recommended for a heavy vehicle. Or you can scout around and try to find some custom wheels for the 6-lug pattern.

"55 PICK-EM-UP

I am very interested in your magazine TRUCKIN'. It's the best one going and it's a big help to me in more ways than one. I got me a 1955 Ford pick-em-up and I'd give my left arm to see it featured in your fine mag.

Do you still print the magazine? I live in Pasadena, Texas and I haven't seen any more TRUCKIN's since the July '77 issue. How can I get the issues I missed?

Also, how would I get my pick-em-up in TRUCKIN'? It sure would be a big honor. I noticed the publishing company is right in my home town; I used to live right off Brookhurst and Katella. Well, take care, let me hear some good news.

James Tilley
Pasadena, Texas

Editor's Note: To get back issues, you need to send a check or money order to TRM for $1.50 for each magazine (includes postage and handling). As far as a feature article on your truck, just send in some good photos in black and white and color.

LADY TRUCKER

I get your magazine every month and really like it. But I don't see much about women and their trucks. Here is a picture of mine. It's a '74 black Chevy

with camper shell, spot light, Desert Dog tires, and US wheels. It's a real fine street machine.

Lynda Byerts
Santa Paula, CA

Editor's Note: Thanks much for sharing your truck with us. We're sure there are more ladies with trucks of their own, we just haven't received many letters or photos though.

BUILDING A '57 CHEVY

I am 16 years old and am building a '57 Chevy stepside, the one with the big back window. I would like to know where I could get window gaskets for both the windshield and rear window. I have looked everywhere, but everyone tells me these gaskets are not made anymore. Any help in this matter would be greatly appreciated.

Brian Buckner
Miami Springs, Florida

Editor's Note: Parts for the early Chevy trucks are rather scarce for sure. You just have to keep looking around. Try a few Chevy dealers; they just might have what you need, or can trace down

the parts through other dealers across the country. Another source would be an automotive swap meet. There are people who specialize in buying NOS (new old stock) parts from dealers, then sell them at these swap meets. Or you could try to locate a club that caters to early Chevy trucks; the members usually know where to find parts. And if you still are having problems locating window gaskets, try Don and Jim's Truck Parts, 12107 Industrial Ave., South Gate, CA 90280, (213) 633-8961. These guys specialize in '48-'59 Chevy parts.

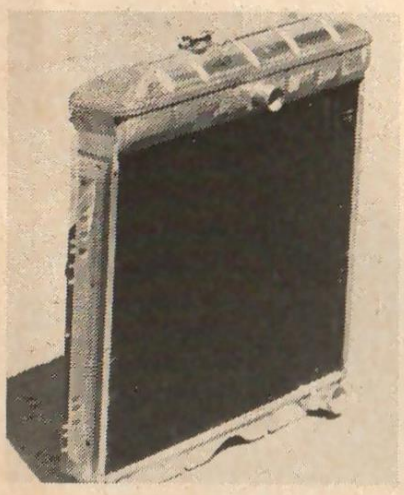
CUSTOM RADIATORS

I'm building a '56 F-100 from the ground up, and my friend is doing a '55 Chevy. We are helping each other out and so far we have the drive trains in, and are working on the bodies. We are trying to get our trucks done for an upcoming show in May.

We used the stock radiators but we were wondering if you knew where we could get custom units. We want radiators with polished brass tanks, and also ones that cool more efficiently than the stock counterparts. Hope you can steer us in the right direction.

Bob Donahue,
Clinton, Oklahoma

Editor's Note: Sounds like you guys should have some show winners when you're done. Be sure to send us photos okay. Just got a letter from a custom radiator shop the other day. The shop is Custom Auto Radiator, 54 W. Main St., Freehold, New Jersey 07728, (201) 364-7474. These people have '53 to '56 F-100 units which come with repro



tanks and brackets, and also polished tanks if you want them. Available are 2¼" — 3 row radiators ($145) and 3" — 4" rows ($168). They also can custom build radiators to your specs. Their west coast distributor is Specialized Auto, 1075 N. Harbor Blvd., Anaheim, CA 92801, (714) 635-6901, and for those in the Mid-West, contact Strictly Street, 25 Burns Dr. North, Brownsburg, Indiana 46112, (317) 852-8331.

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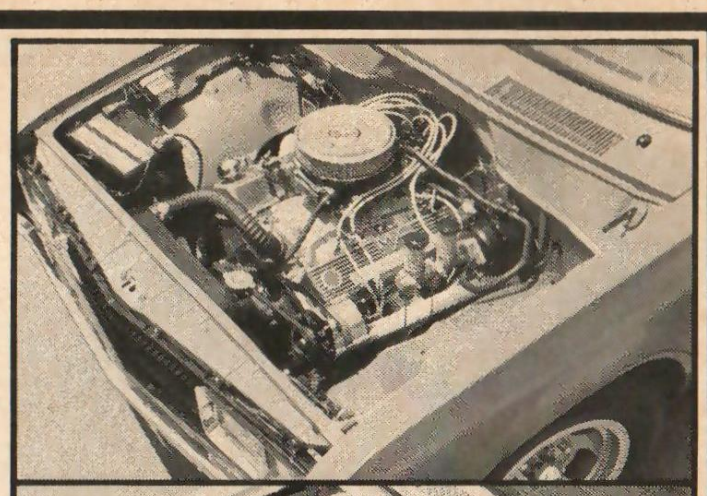

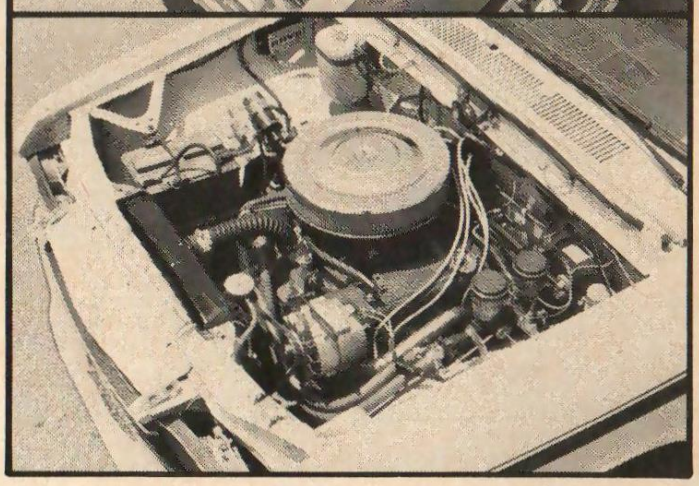

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-UMT 250 with 4WD

THE ULTIMATE COURIER

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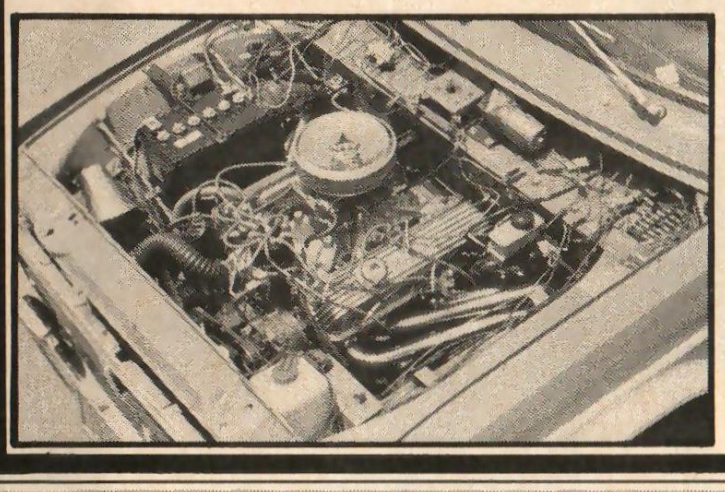

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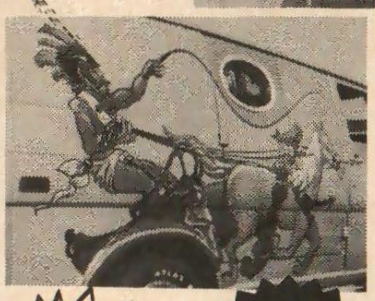

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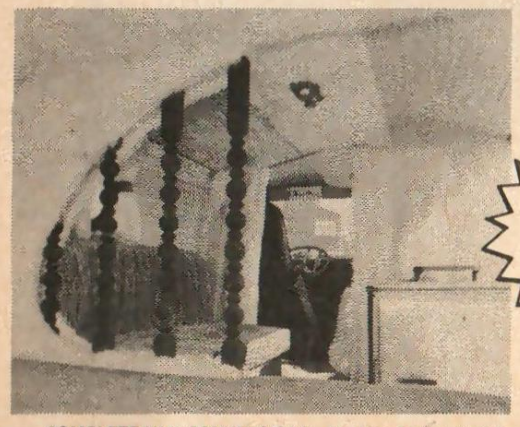

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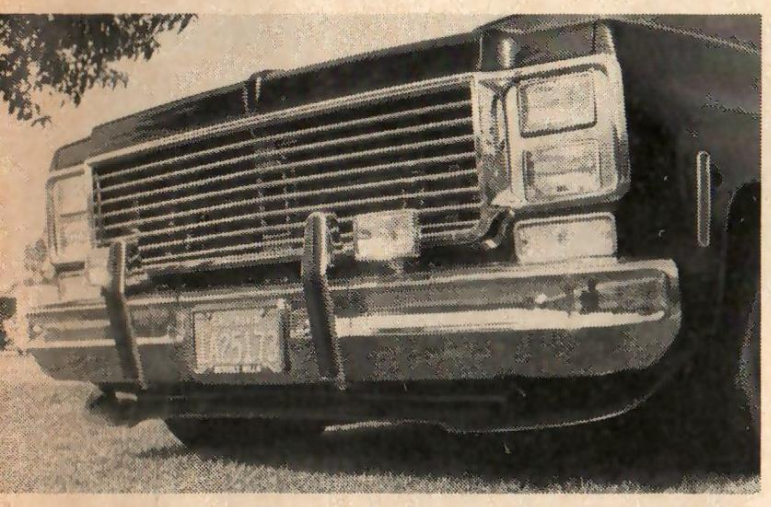

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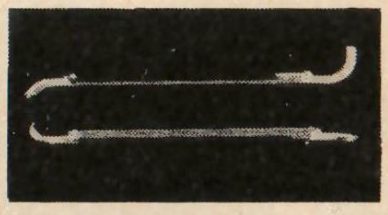

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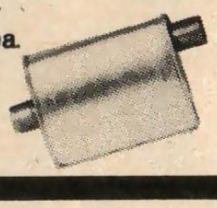

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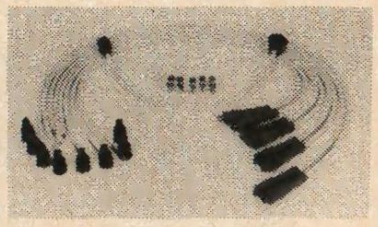

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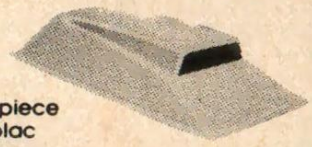

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Trick vans and trucks were displayed at . . .

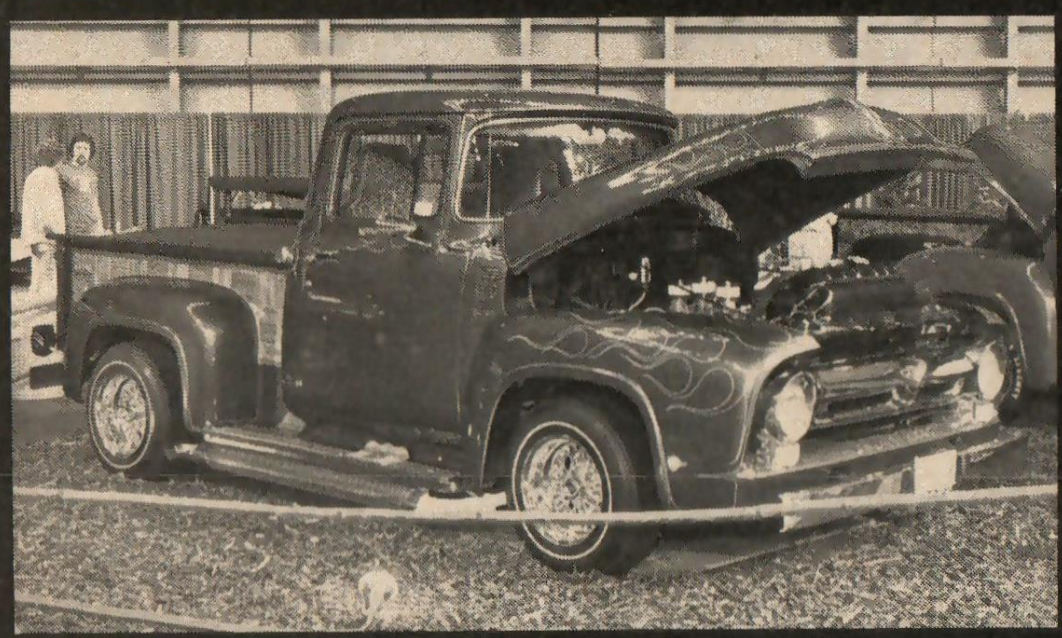
SEATTLE'S KINGDOME SHOW

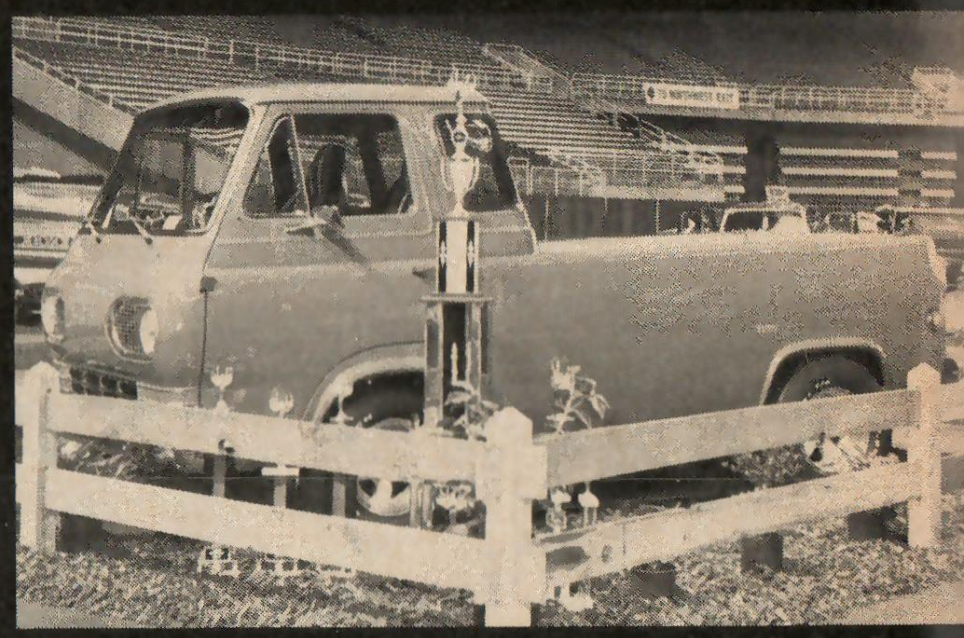
photography Robert K. Smith

At the Kingdome in Seattle, Washington last October 7th through the 9th, there were a lot of super neat vehicles displayed. Norman "Sparky" Taft of Major Promotions produced this World of Wheels show.

The majority of vehicles in this Kingdome show were outstanding street rods, but the van and truck department didn't look too shabby either. Greg of Akron showed up with all three Eagles, Flying Eagle I, II, and his new Mini-Eagle, a Honda Civic turned into a mini-van. From Detroit were Yosemite Sam and Radical Rickshaw, two far out vans. Other trick vans included Ed Mancini's Paranoia early Ford, the Super Star owned by Ron Tolles of St. Louis, Russ Santwire's For A Few Dollars More, and a host of sharp Canadian vans.

As far as trucks go, this show had quite a few nice ones to scope out. Nice street units (F-100's, stepsides, mini's) and off-road machines were displayed throughout the Kingdome. If you like custom vans and trucks, and street rods too, this show was one to visit. The Northwest does produce some well-built machinery!

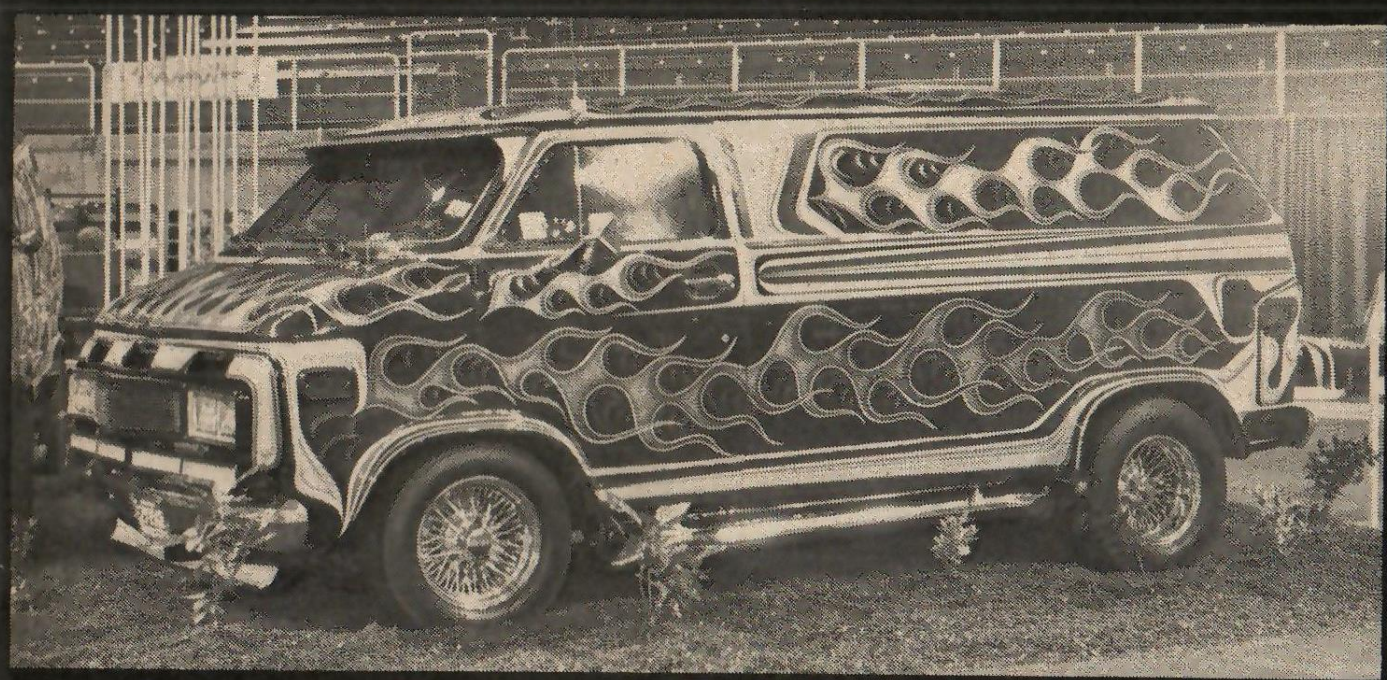




ABOVE—Local F-100 club, Puget Sound Ltd's, entered some nice ones. Here's John Carlyle's '56 with 292, tri-power, velvet interior, Tru-Spoke wire wheels.

ABOVE RIGHT—"Rapid Red" took six years to build but owner/builder Rollin Hayslip wanted it right. Features Ken Rogers paint, 302, C-4, late rear.

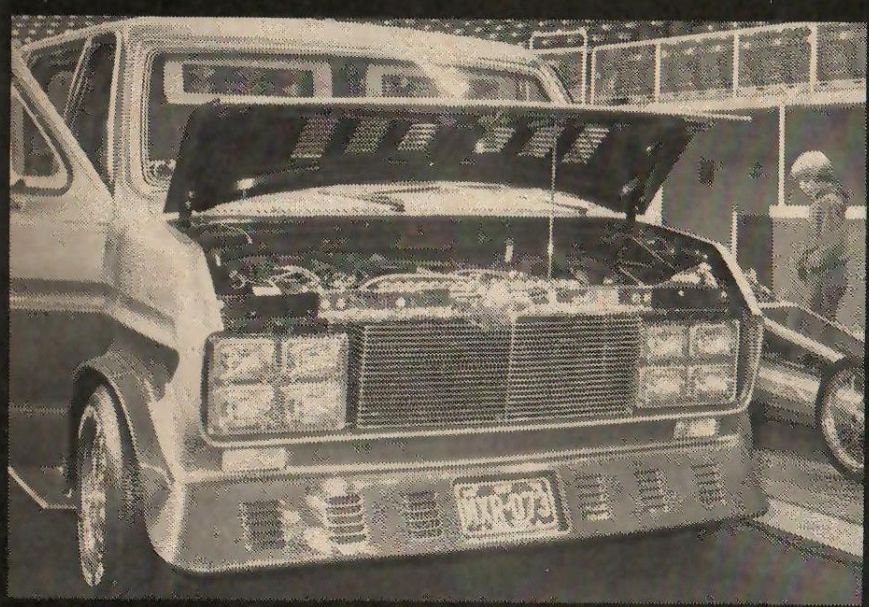
RIGHT—Not too many mini-trucks showed up but this '75 Datsun was a hit. Paul Ashenberner owns it; check out camper, flames, wheels.

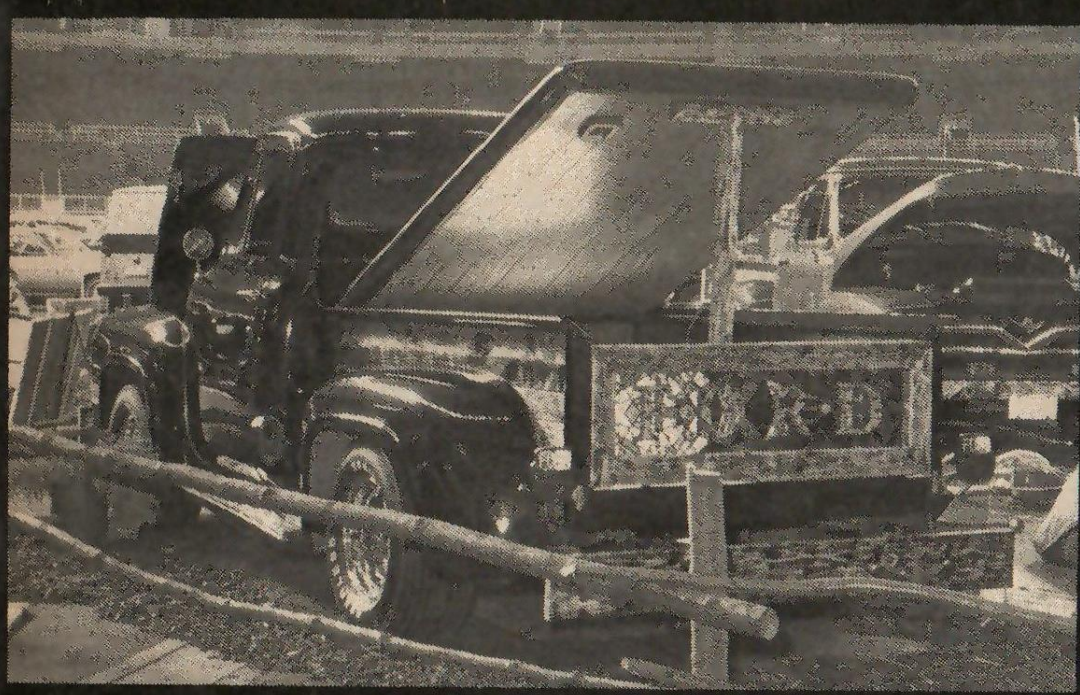


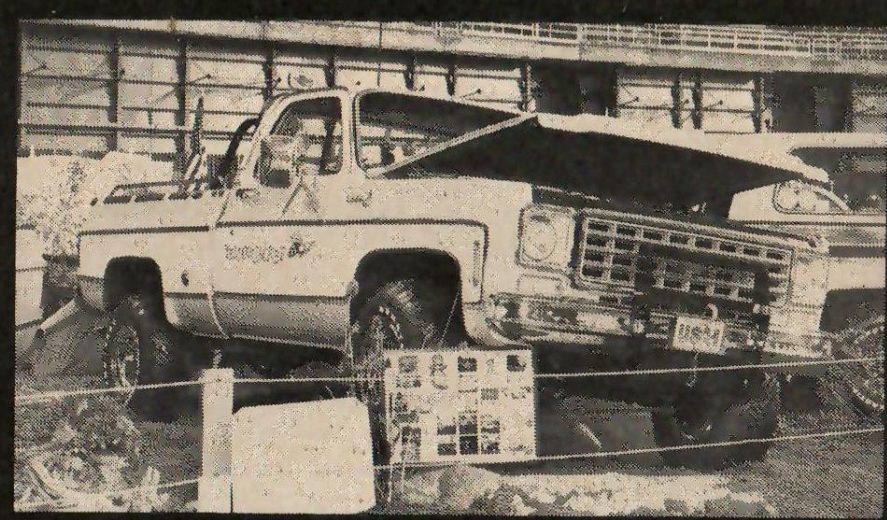
LEFT—Dennis Brickner (Southfield, Michigan) drove to Seattle with his chopped Chevy van, Radical Rickshaw. Note front end work, Yosemite Sam paint, Dayton wires.

BELOW LEFT—This show had quite a few feature vans. Here's front end of Ron Tolles' Super Star Ford. This van is a premium piece of craftsmanship.

BELOW—Ed Mancini's Paranoia is from Anaheim, California. Radical mural, vinyl top, Appliance wires, and tufted mohair interior are trick.





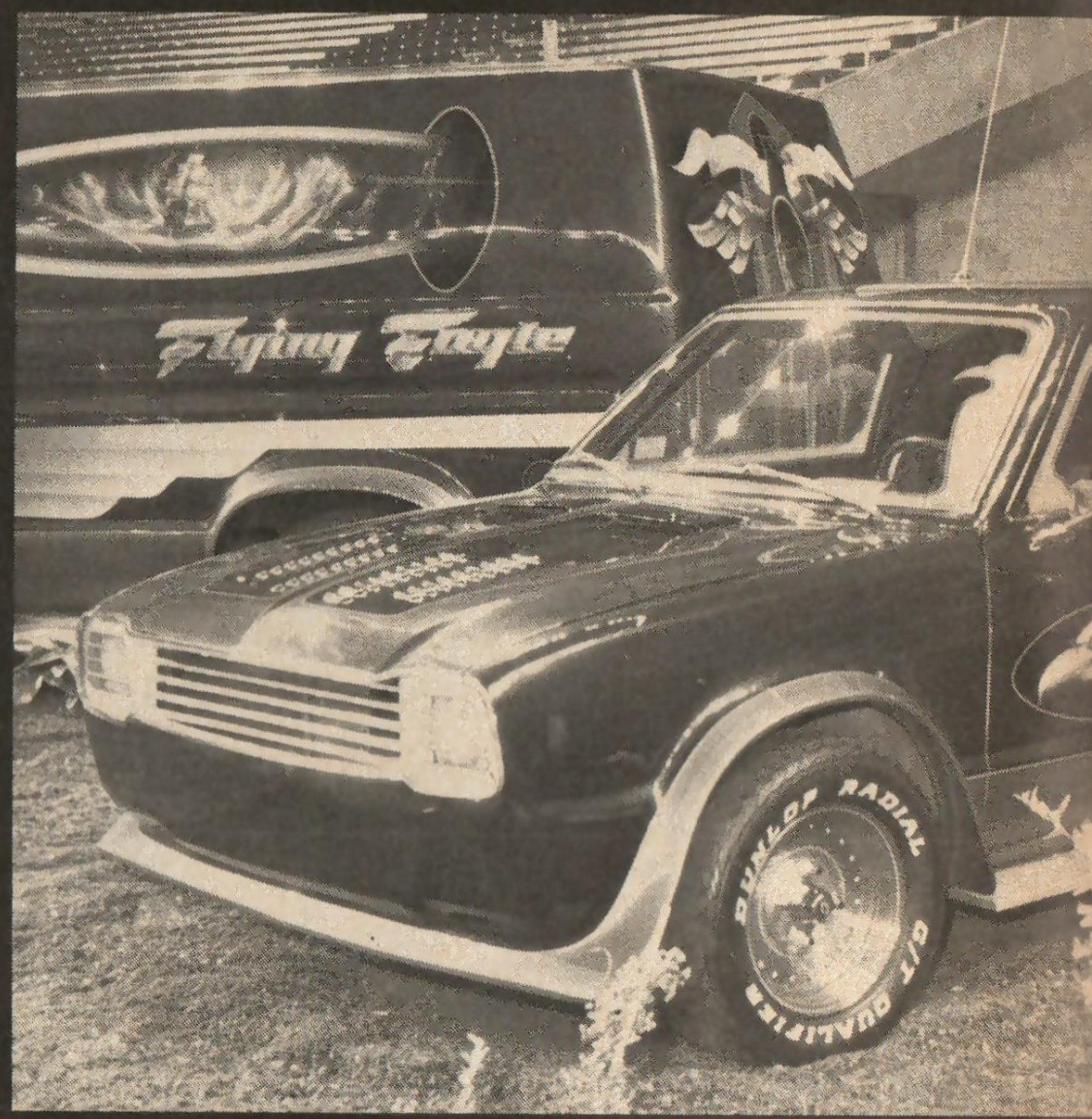


ABOVE—Thunder Trucks club of Auburn, Washington had a nice display. This '76 4-by (owned by Ron Tope) sports Stroppe roll bar, Hickey spring kit, monster tires.

ABOVE—Another trick F-100 from Puget Sound Ltd's is this clean '55 from Renton, Washington. Owner Clay Nichols really turns some heads with his 327, 4-speed, black hauler. Extensive wood work was done throughout. Check out that stained glass tailgate.

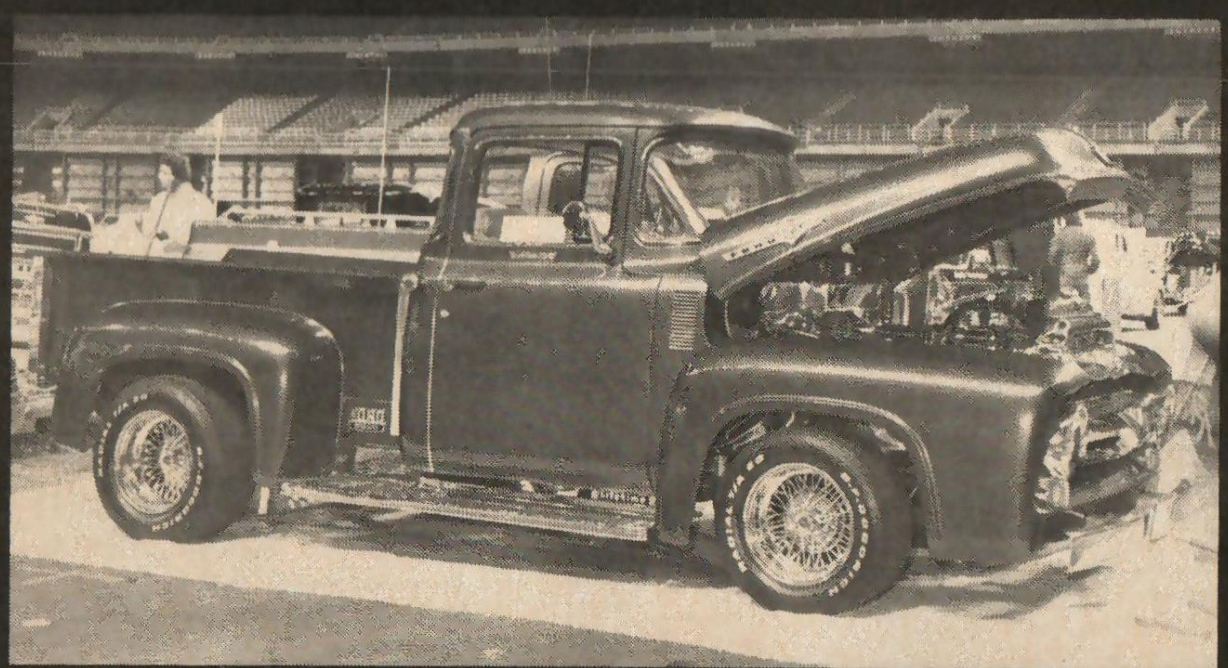
RIGHT—Jim and Lyn Dodson drove in with their Blue Draggin' Fleetside. Lots of body mods (shaved handles, roll pans, louvered hood, custom lights) were done at Eastside Customs—The Butcher Shop. Nice interior work is by Jasper's.

SEATTLE'S KINGDOME SHOW



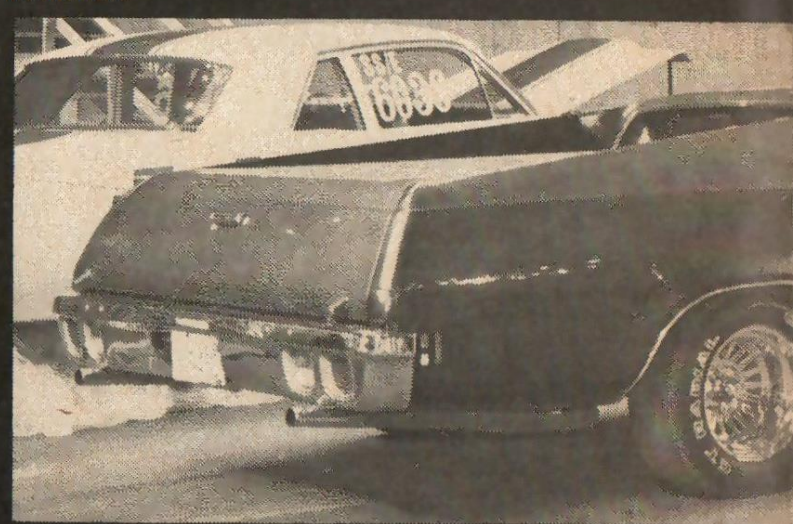
ABOVE—Another trick off-road truck is this '76 Ford F-250 owned by John Peterson, Bothel, WA. Features custom bumpers, rollbar/tool box.

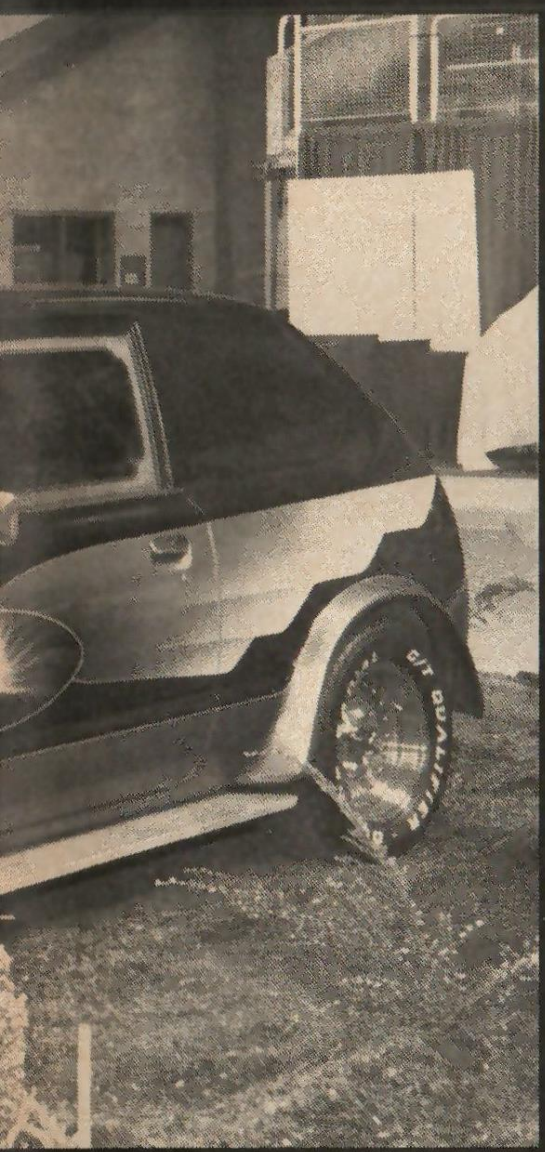
LEFT—The interior of Russ Santwire's For a Few Dollars More Ford van is finely detailed with Western theme, just like the nicely done exterior.

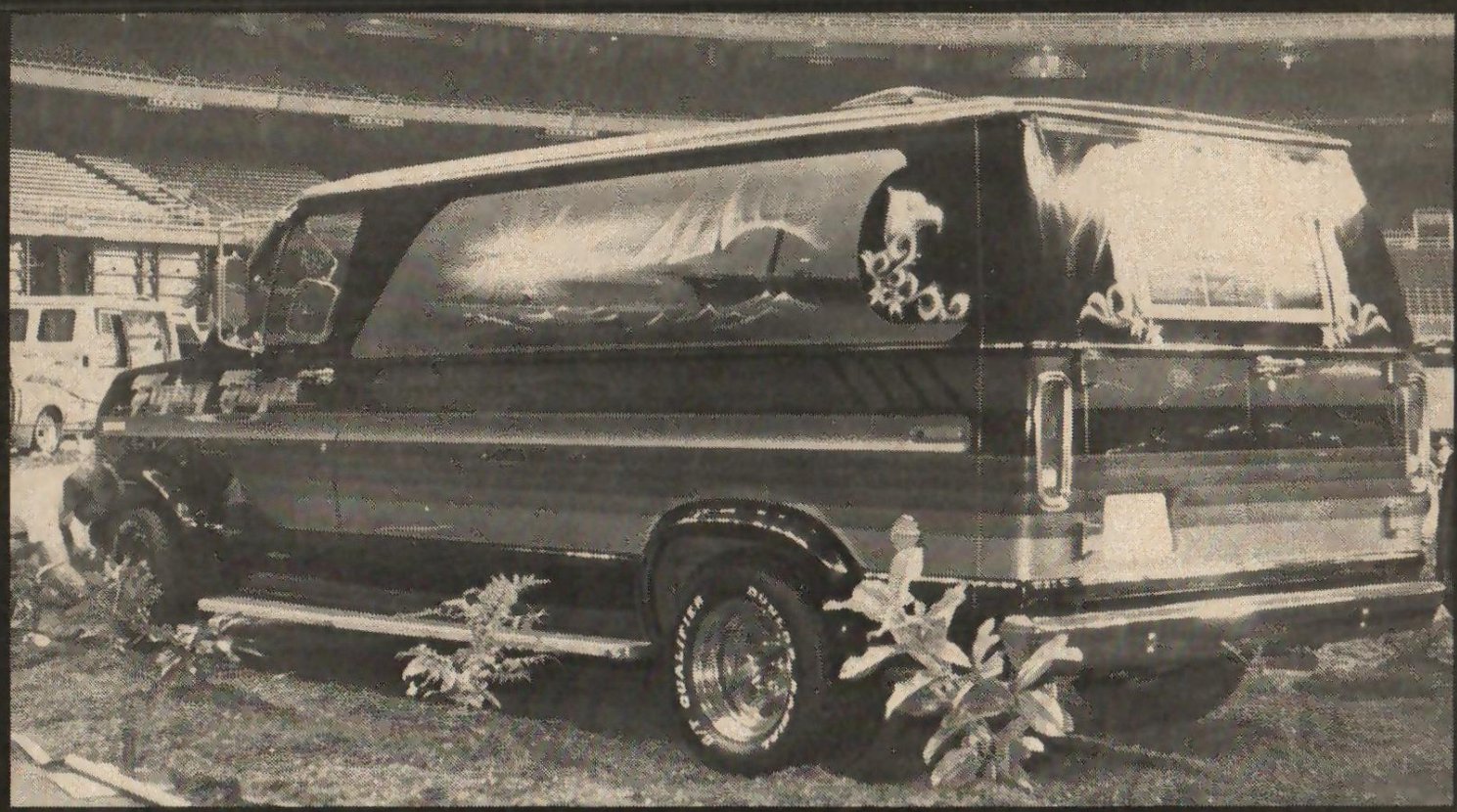


LEFT—From Kent, Washington is "Rich's 56," a super sano 100. Hightlights are polished 428 Cobra, blue lacquer by Gordon Houston, Jasper velvet interior, redwood bed, lots of chrome, Tru-Spokes.

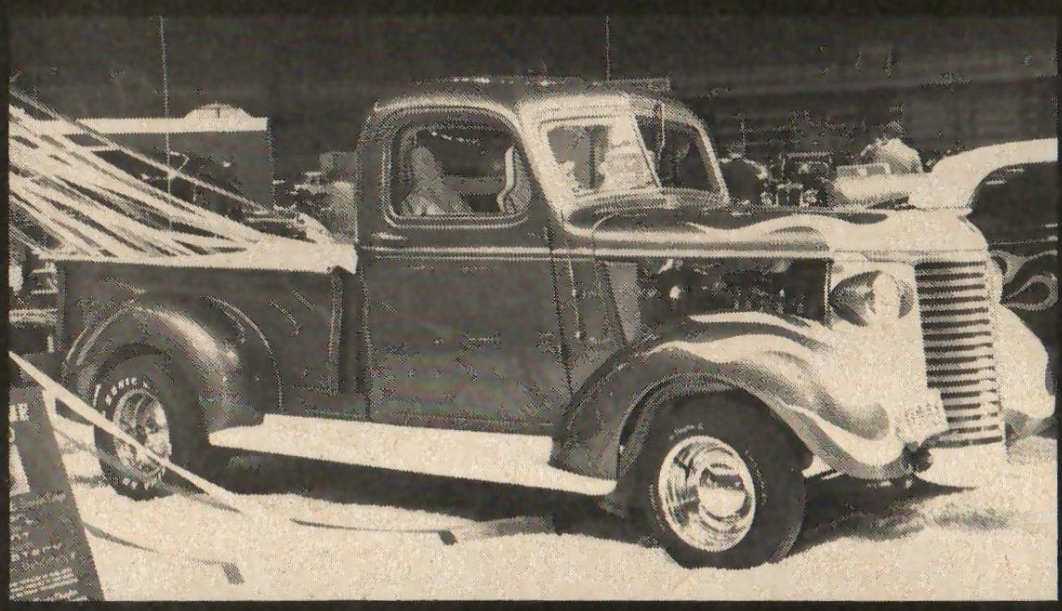
BELOW—BMC Body's (Seattle) shop truck is this 5-inch chopped, T-topped '77 El Camino. Owner: Staten Medsker.





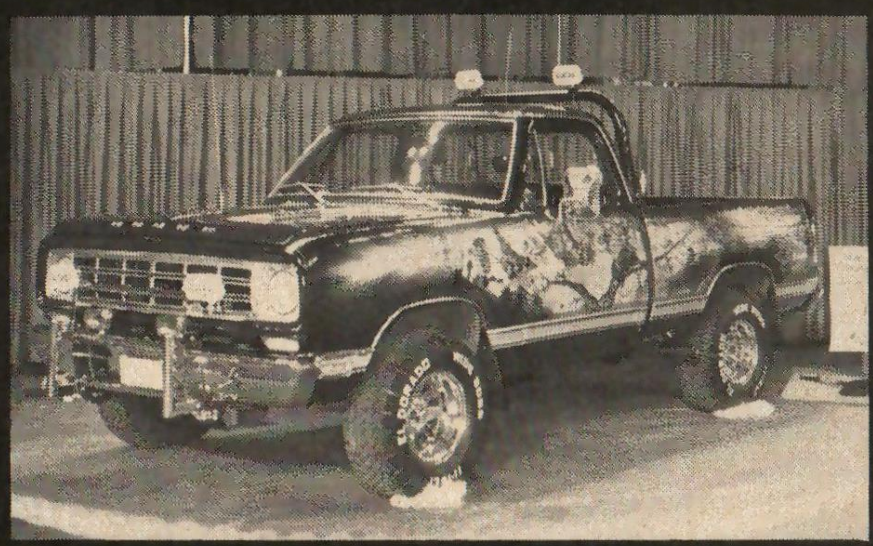


Greg of Akron made the show with the Flying Eagle I and II, and his latest creation, the Mini Eagle, a Honda Civic turned van. Both Eagle vans have fresh paint jobs. Owner of Eagle I is "JR"; he's shown making last minute clean-ups. By the way, both vans are for sale, I—$10,000, II—$13,000.



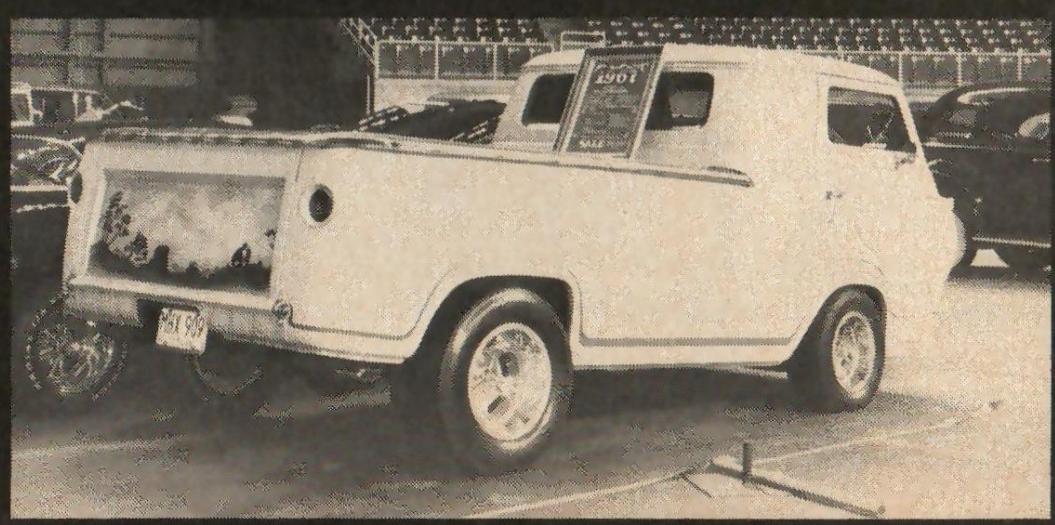
LEFT—Quite a number of street rods were present. This '39 Chevy pickup is powered by a 301 smallblock, and is nice throughout. Jim and Shelley McCallum, of Olympia, Washington, are proud owners.

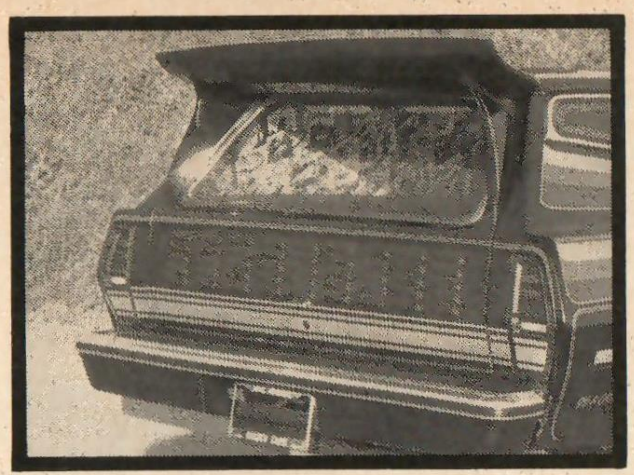
BELOW—This muraled '76 Dodge Power Wagon belongs to Bill Rindal of Mt. Vernon. Bill Kapuni did a super job with airbrush, and striping brush. Bill's dad Jerry made roll bar, hitch, and helped with overall construction.



LEFT—This freshly painted (by Eckhardt) Space Warrior GMC is another sharp looking Canadian van. Ron Sedlbaur is happy with it too; interior features a space tunnel effect.

RIGHT—Mitch Kim entered his immaculate '67 Ford Econo Pickup. Flawless body work is talent of Harold Walton, Lonnie Gilbertson, Dave Crisp. Crisp also sprayed on the beautiful paint.

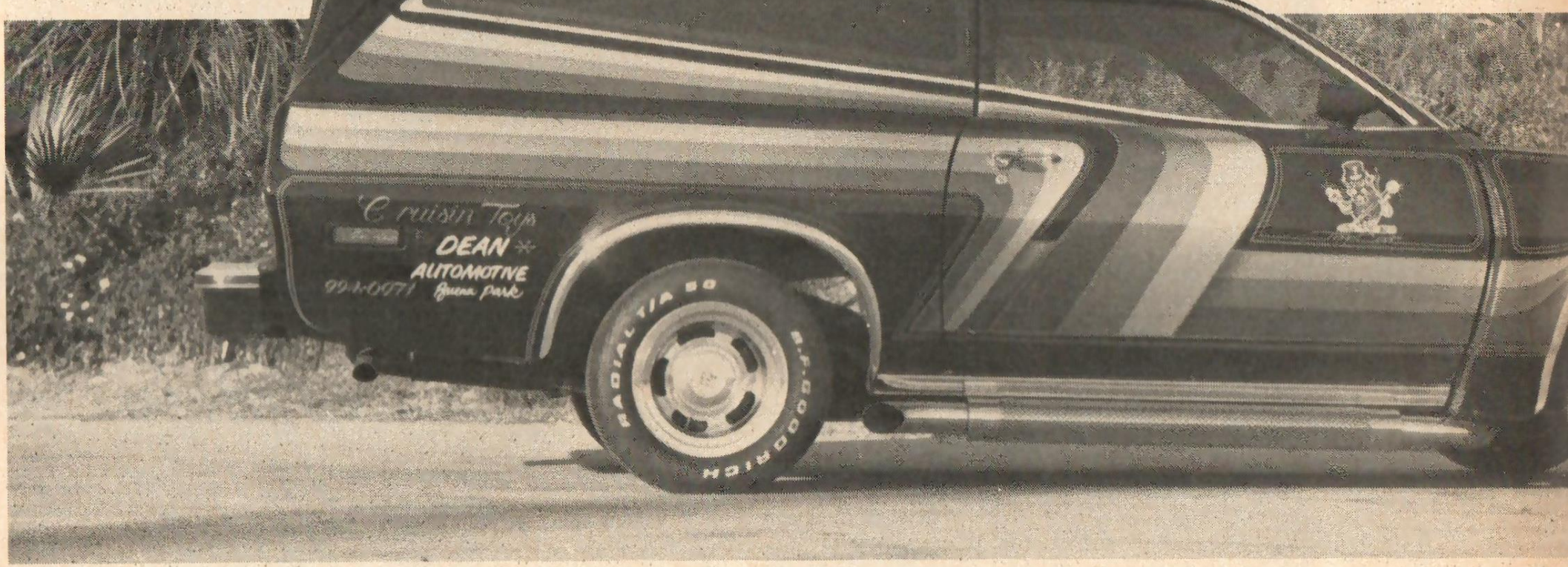




FAR LEFT—The interior of the Topcat is stock in the forward section. Tweed insert seats need no help.

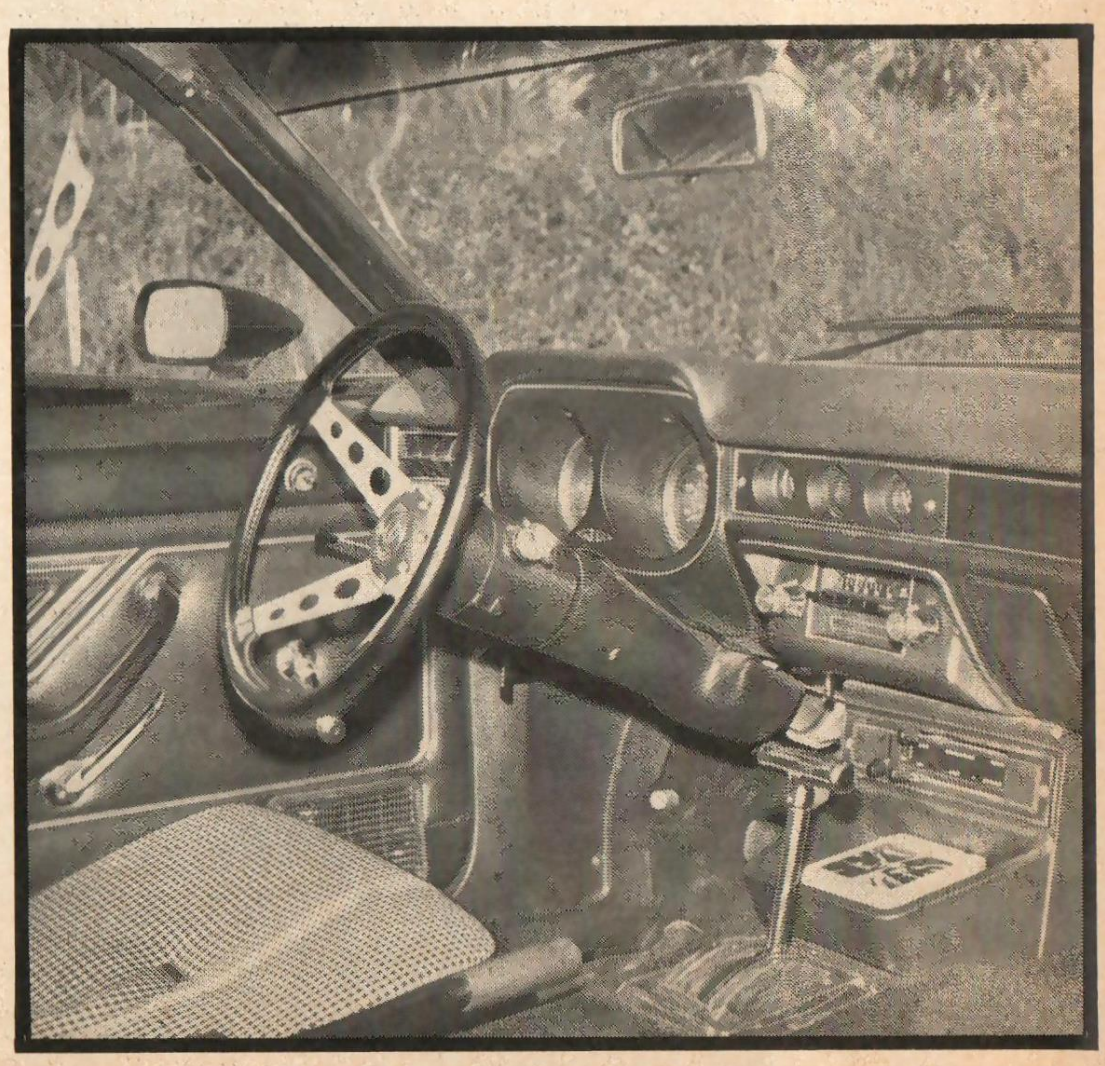
LEFT—Porsche style whales tail and louvers were added to the rear. Safety bumpers were, however, left intact.

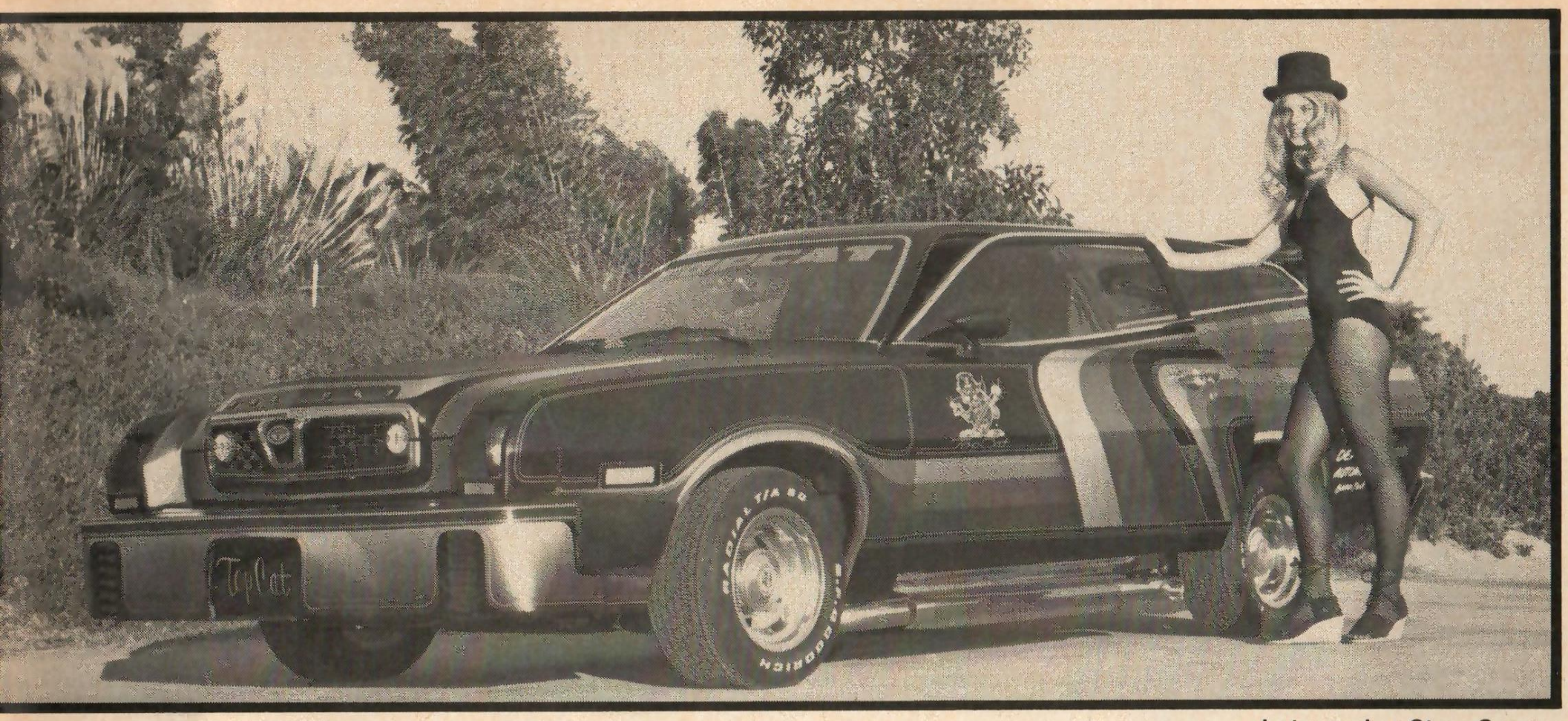
BELOW—The Topcat is a result of Dean's involvement with Cruisin Toys. Hopefully you'll be able to buy one just like it soon.



ABOVE—Kim Johnson is our pretty model, and she really thought the Topcat wagon was neat.

RIGHT—We really liked the Mercury interior trim package. The dual gauge pod and rally type steering wheel add European flair.



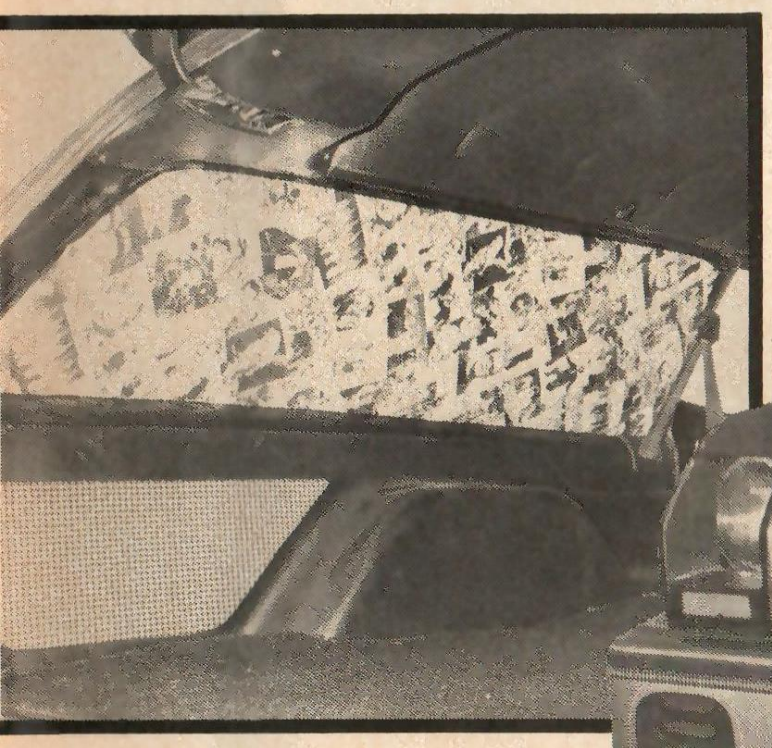


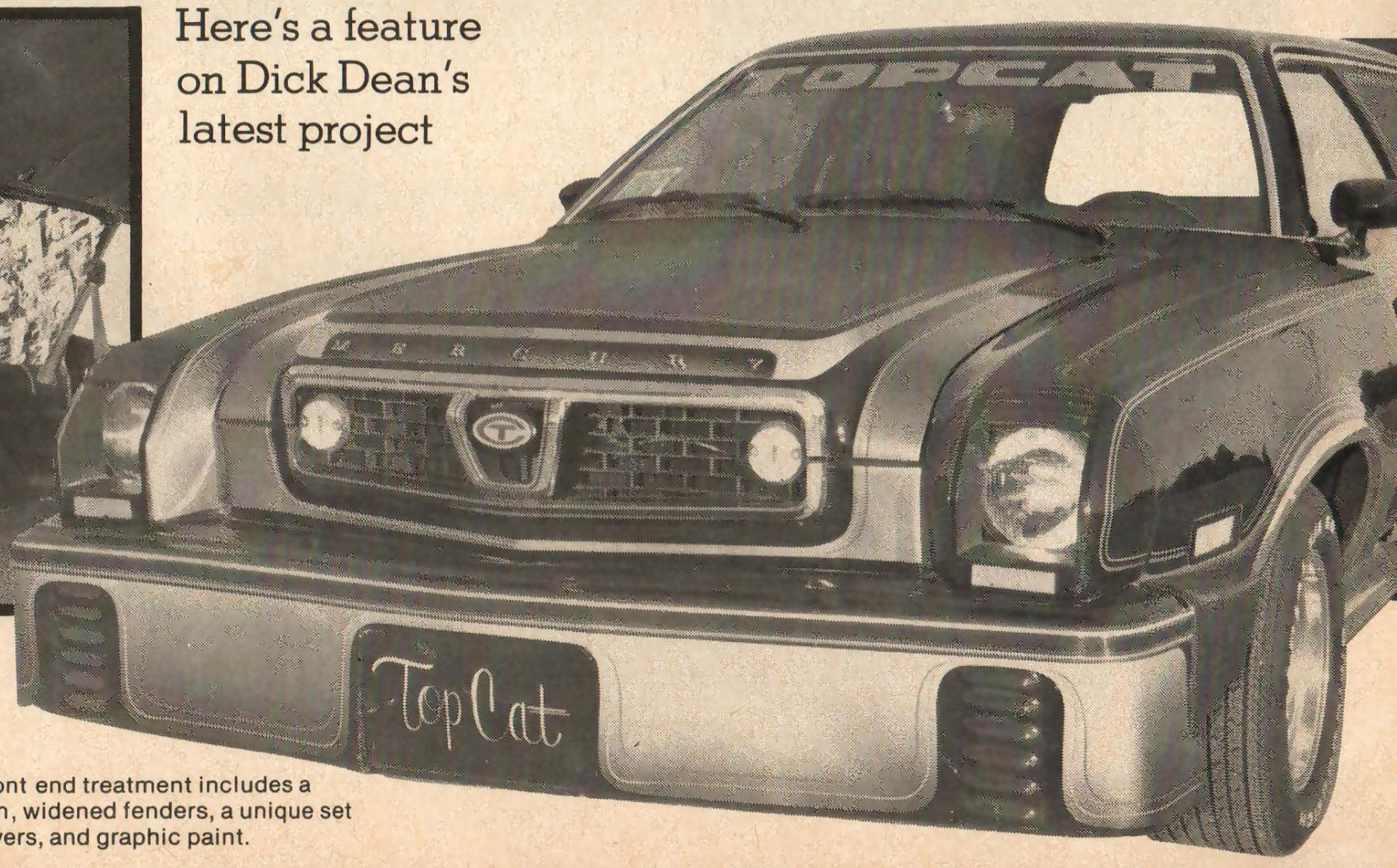
photography: Steve Coonan

ABOVE—The graphic stripes were done in various shades of grey over a black base. Red accent pin striping is by Kelly. Aluminum slot mags use Dick Dean's Jock Cap lug covers.

TOPCAT WAGON

Here's a feature on Dick Dean's latest project

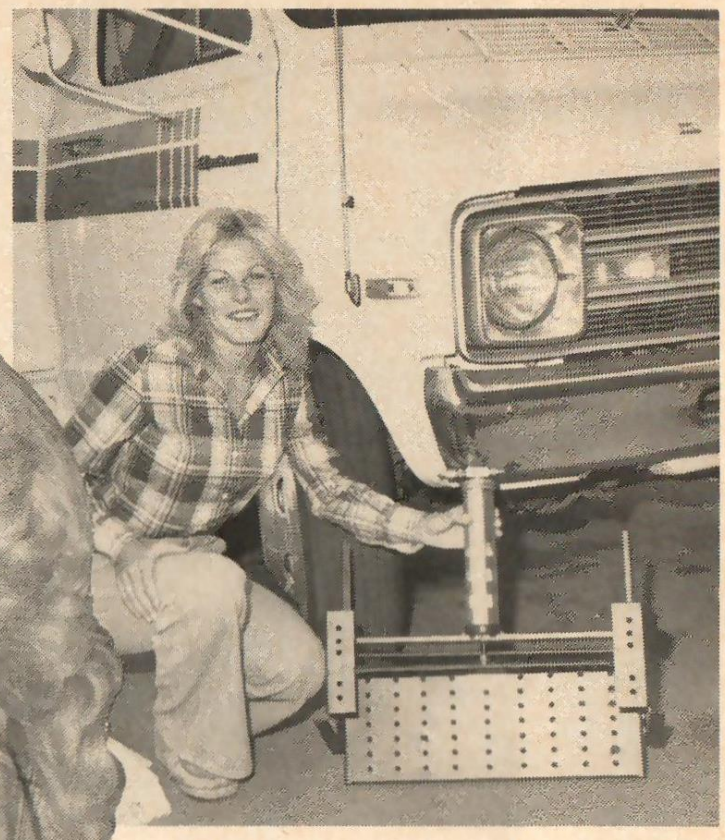




ABOVE—To go along with the tweed upholstery, a montage of 1940's movie photos was added to the cargo area.

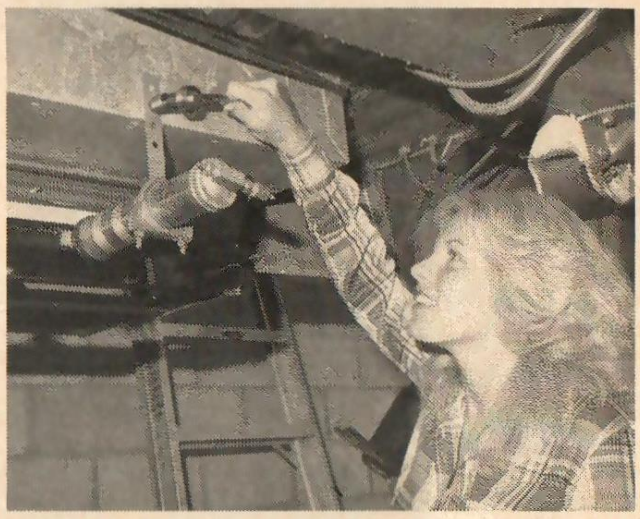
RIGHT—The front end treatment includes a louvered air dam, widened fenders, a unique set of headlight covers, and graphic paint.

ROBO STEP



ABOVE — Donna "The Fox" Hudson shows you what the basic ROBO Step looks like before she shows how easy it is to install.

A new vacuum operated, automatically retractable step for motor homes and recreational vehicles.



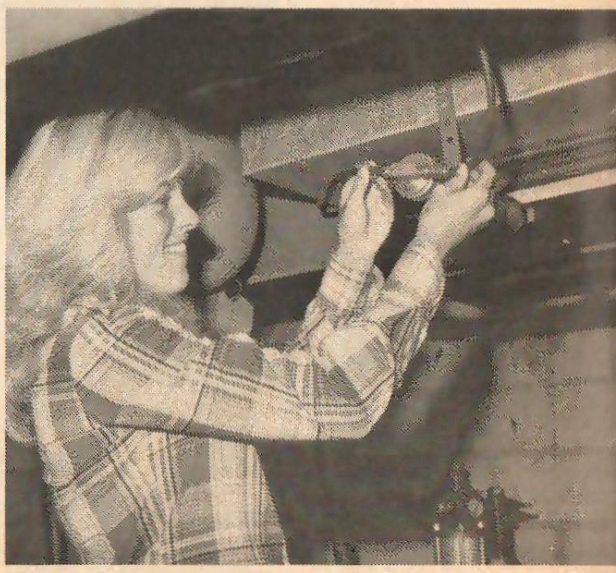
ABOVE — The ROBO mounts directly under the mini-motor home in the stock step location. A strap is supplied to support cylinder.

If you own a motor home, there's a step located under the door entry on the right side of the vehicle. How many times have you forgotten to push that darn thing back under the vehicle? For some, quite a few times right? Well, now you can remedy the problem (especially if you have run into a pole or something with the step) by installing a Robo Step.

Robo Step is a spring loaded, vacuum actuated step that retracts automatically as soon as the engine is started. And it is a simple installation. Foxy Donna Hudson shows us how easy it really is.

Manufactured by the people at Vacuum Automatic Step Corporation, 1100 W. Katella Ave., Suite G, Orange, CA 92667, this Robo Step features a safe non-slip surface, heavy metal construction throughout, and fits most standard motor homes and RV's. And because it operates by engine vacuum, there is no need for complicated wiring. Also, a door activated safety lock keeps it in the extended position when the door is open, and in the retracted position when the door is closed and the engine started.

When you order a Robo Step, you get all kinds of goodies for installation. Included is a switch assembly with



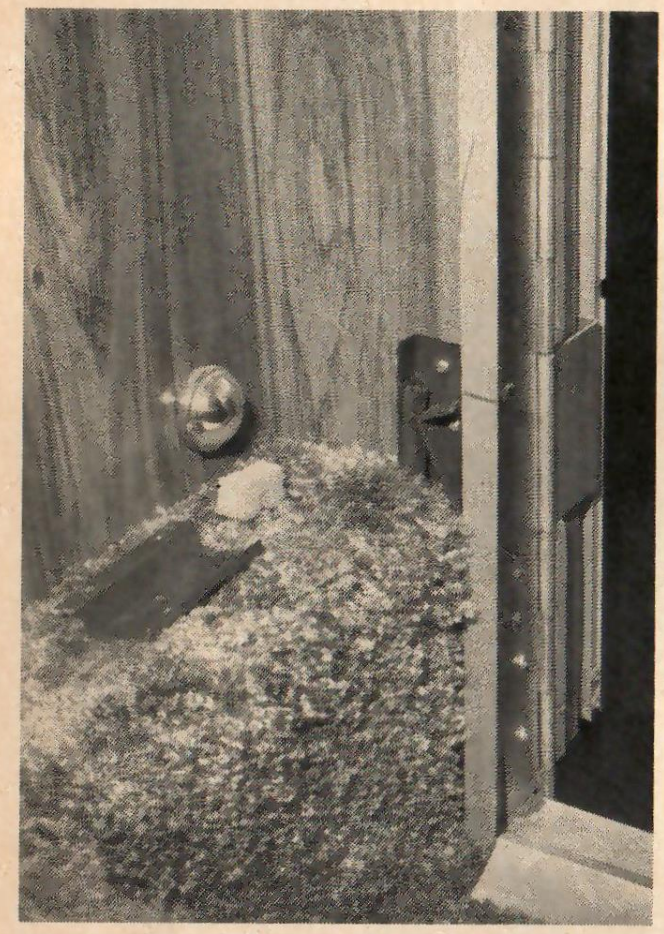
Both vacuum hoses (one at engine vacuum and one at door switch) are slipped over cylinder fittings.

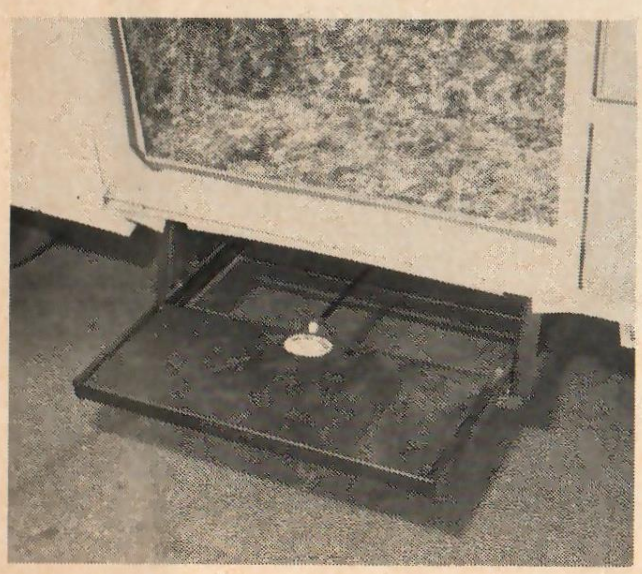
treated hose and filter, cylinder mounting clamp, cylinder mounting bracket, vacuum hose tee, 17 feet of vacuum hose, three tie-wraps, two ¼x1" lag screws, and (5) 3/8-inch X #6 sheet metal screws.

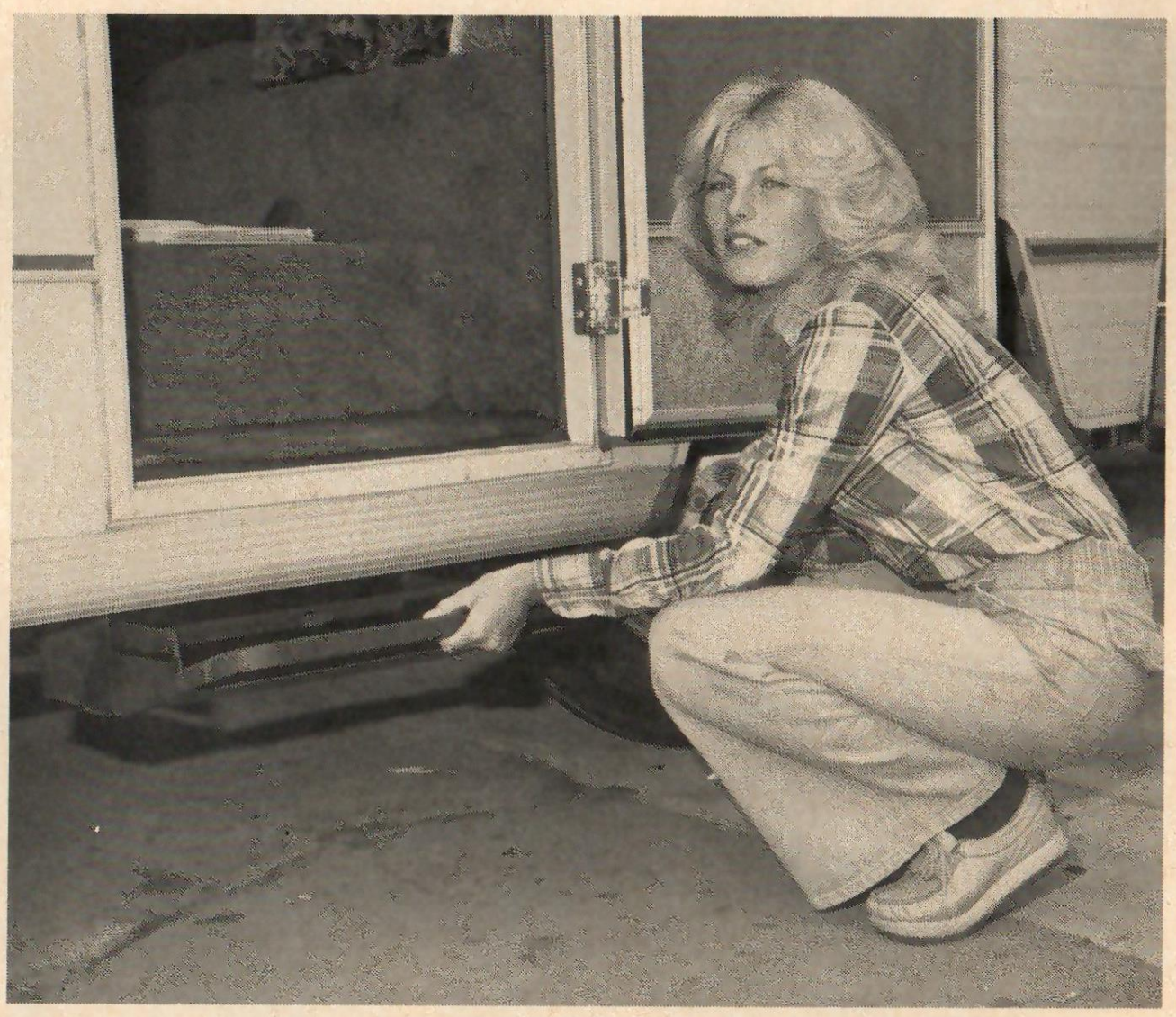
Installation consists of three major steps. First, the new Robo Step must be mounted to the coach (in many cases, this step bolts directly to the stock step mounts). The second phase is mounting the door switch, and the third is installing the vacuum line. For a better idea of how simple it is to install, follow along and see how Donna Hudson does it.

If you want to be one step ahead (excluse the pun), this Robo Step is the answer. It eliminates a lot of extra time and hassle. So get one for your mini-motor home, recreational vehicle, or maybe even an up-in-the-air off-road truck or van.

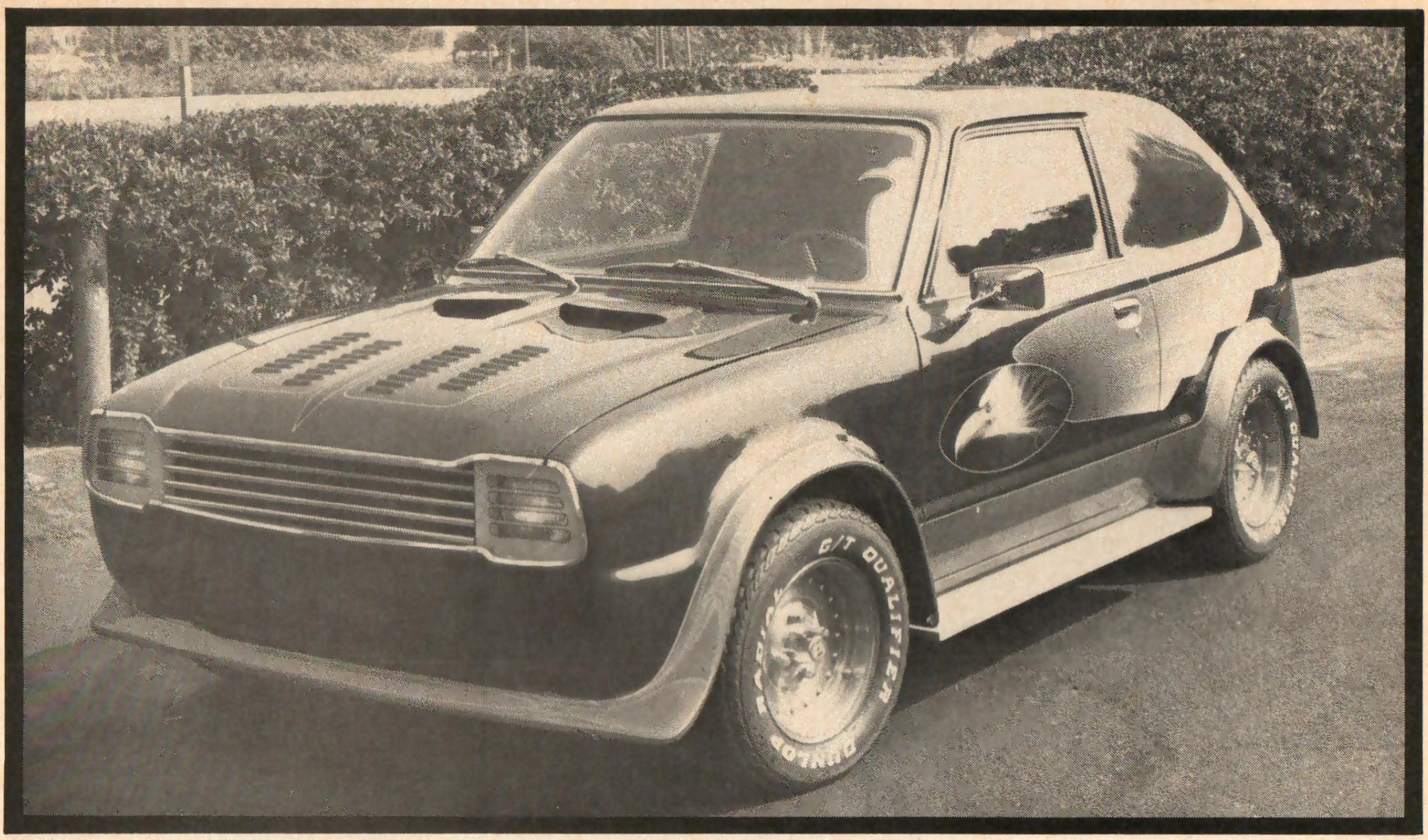
RIGHT — Tie-wraps are supplied so the vacuum hose can be secured and kept out of the way of any sharp objects or heat sources.





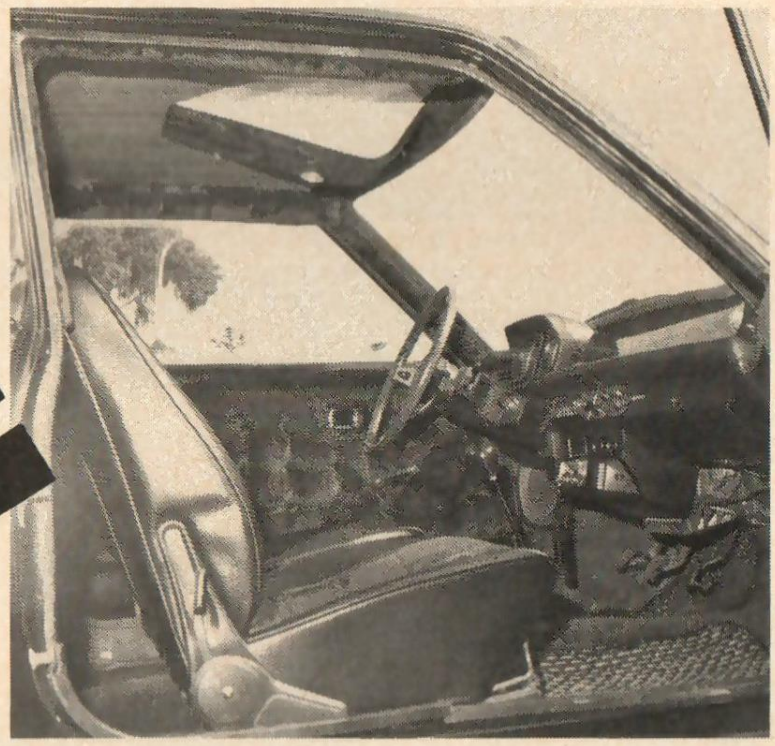


The door switch is a pinch valve that allows the step to thrust outward when the door is opened. Also, when door is closed and engine started, it causes step to automatically retract. At left is photo of the trick ROBO Step, in the extended position. Above is Donna pushing in a stock step, often times forgotten by many motor home owners. For sure this ROBO Step is definitely worth looking into.



MINI EAGLE

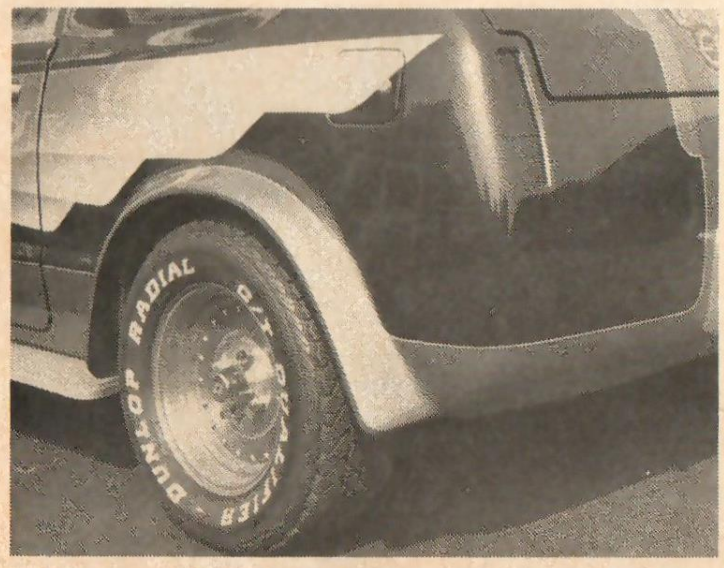
Greg of Akron's answer to the mini-van a la Honda Civic



The interior sports wood wheel, AM/FM stereo, CB, mini-overhead console, digital clock, coco mats, crushed velvet, naugahyde, and wood.

Undoubtedly, Greg of Akron is one of the tops in custom painting, especially in the van world. Three years ago, he built and painted the Flying Eagle I van. It went over so well, he decided to build another Eagle; it also took top honors at many shows and van happenings. Since then, Grego has repainted both Eagles, and also built a third Eagle, this time a smaller version. It started out as a Honda Civic, and ended up as a mini-van.

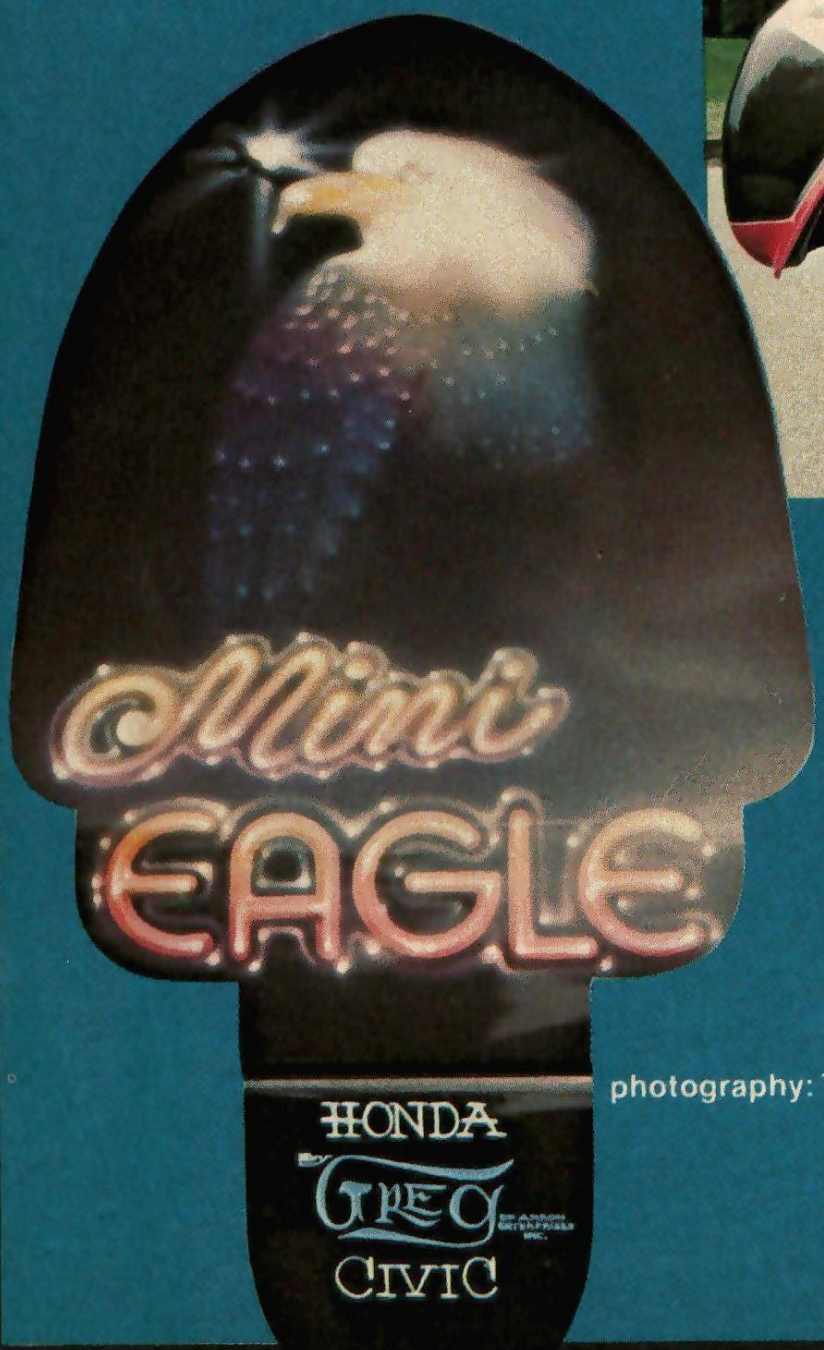
This Mini Eagle is something else. The quarter and rear windows were removed and filled with fiberglass, drip rails partially removed, front and rear roll pans added, and flares and spoiler molded in. Greg has gone one step further though; he made bolt-on kits for Honda Civic owners who want the mini-van look. These kits (flares, spoiler, window fillers, etc.) will be offered through Greg of Akron Enterprises, Inc., for those interested.



Molded flares, roll pan, taillights, painted Center Lines, Dunlop radials are right-on.

As usual, Grego comes up with some trick artwork, and overall paint. Note detailed eagle's head, etched windows, running boards.

Truckin'



photography: Terry Bergdorf

Greg of Akron
Akron, Ohio

TRUCK LOWERING

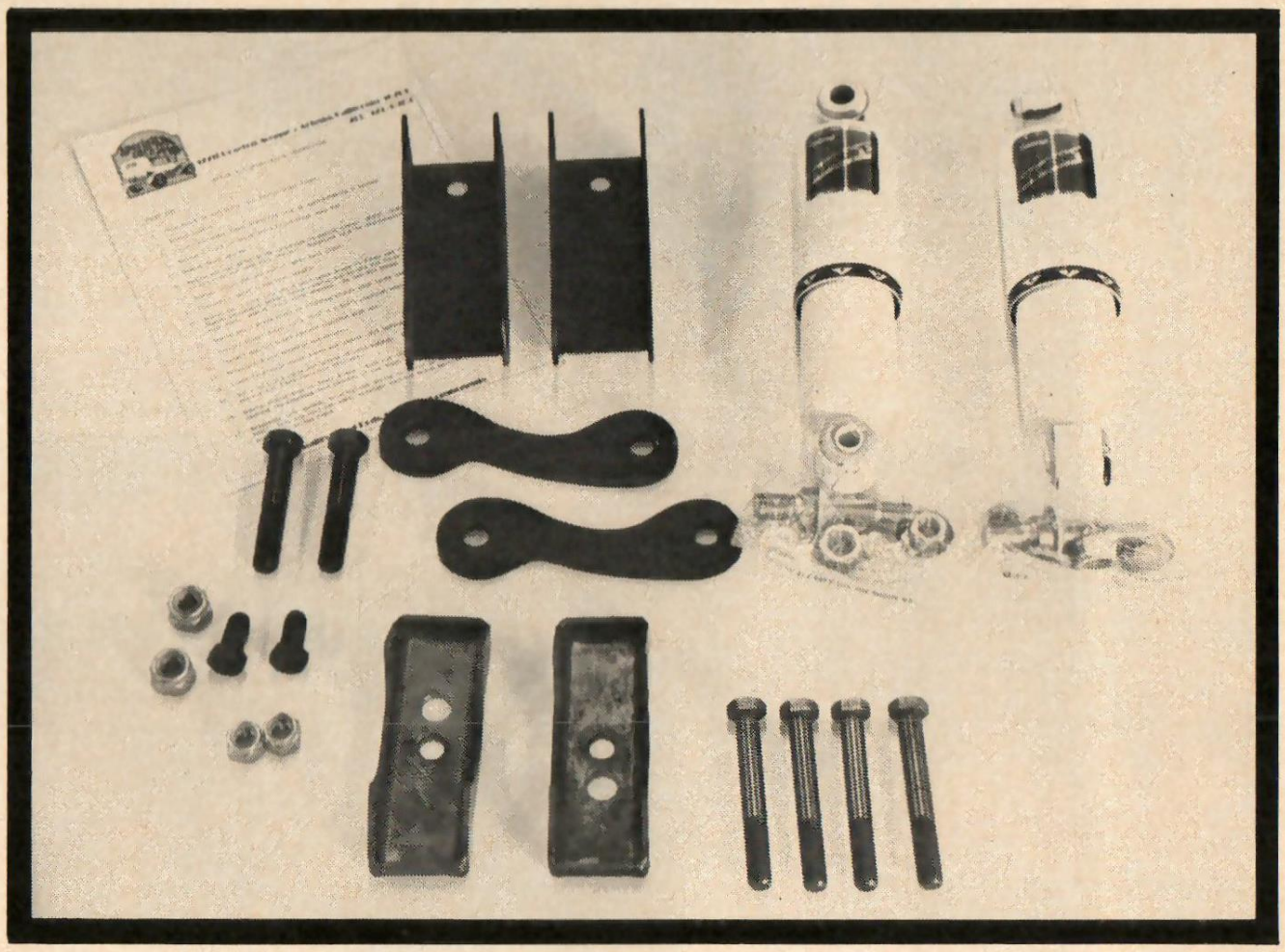
Specialty Cars' new kit for Chevy pickups

by Steve Coonan

Lowered Chevy Fleetsides and Stepsides are currently all the rage. Rarely a day goes by when we don't receive at least one photograph of a pickup that's really down on the ground. Unfortunately, almost as often we hear complaints of poor ride and tire wear from owners of lowered trucks. Low down profiles have been gained at the expense of a workable suspension. It seems the ones that were lowered without adversely effecting suspension geometry are few and far between.

One firm that specializes in lowering the late Chevies is Specialty Cars at 17211 Roseton Ave., Artesia, California 90701. After doing several in the shop, Tom Medlock and Steve Bell of Specialty Cars have decided to offer a lowering kit for '73 and up Chevy and GMC half-tons. The kit will allow any pickup owner to get his truck in the weeds without fouling up normal suspension operation. Included in the kit are upper A-arm spacers and bolts, shorter front shocks (Gabriel Adjustable E's), rear axle mounting pads, rear shock mount extensions, all the necessary hardware, and a complete set of instructions.

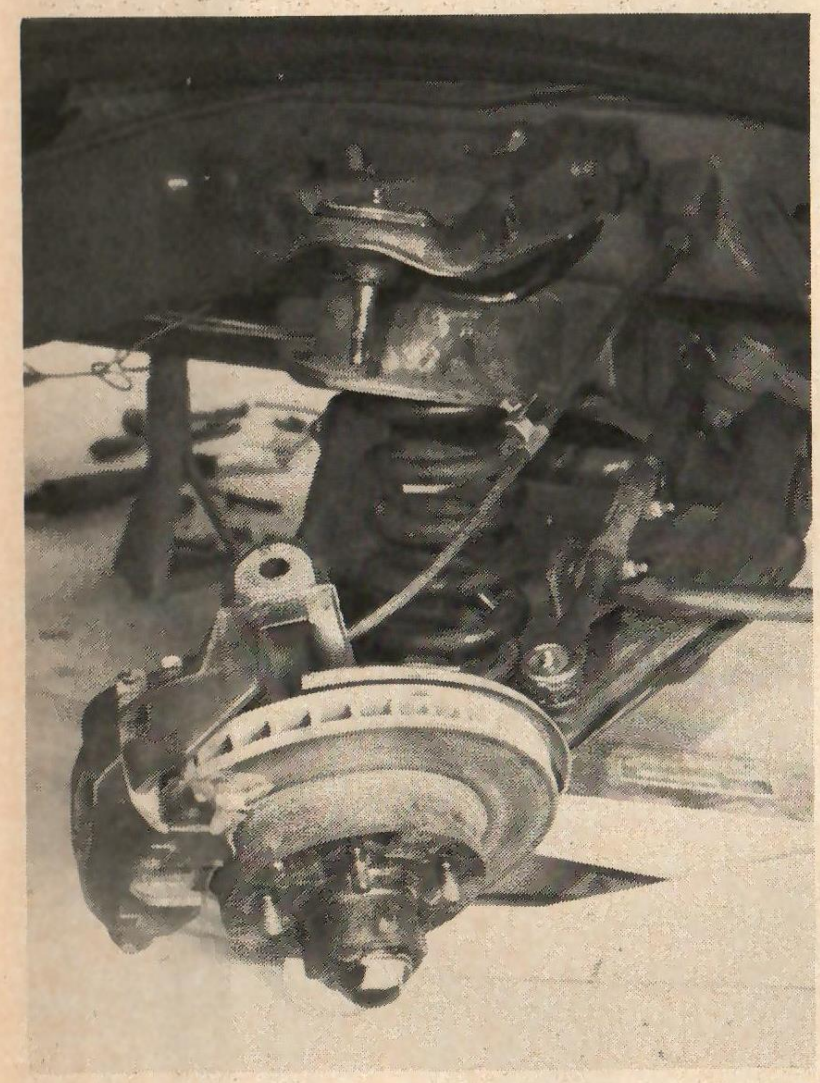
Basically, Specialty Cars lowers the trucks by cutting the coil springs in the front and putting the rearend on top of the leaf springs in the rear. To keep the proper front end geometry, spacers are used to move the upper A-arms out. Shorter shocks are used since stock ones will bottom out on a lowered truck. To get the back end down, the differential is mounted on top of the springs using the spring perches supplied in the kit. The shock mount extensions allow the use of any stock length shocks, including air shocks. With the addition of air shocks, a pickup lowered with the Specialty Cars kit should be able to carry almost as much weight as a stock one.

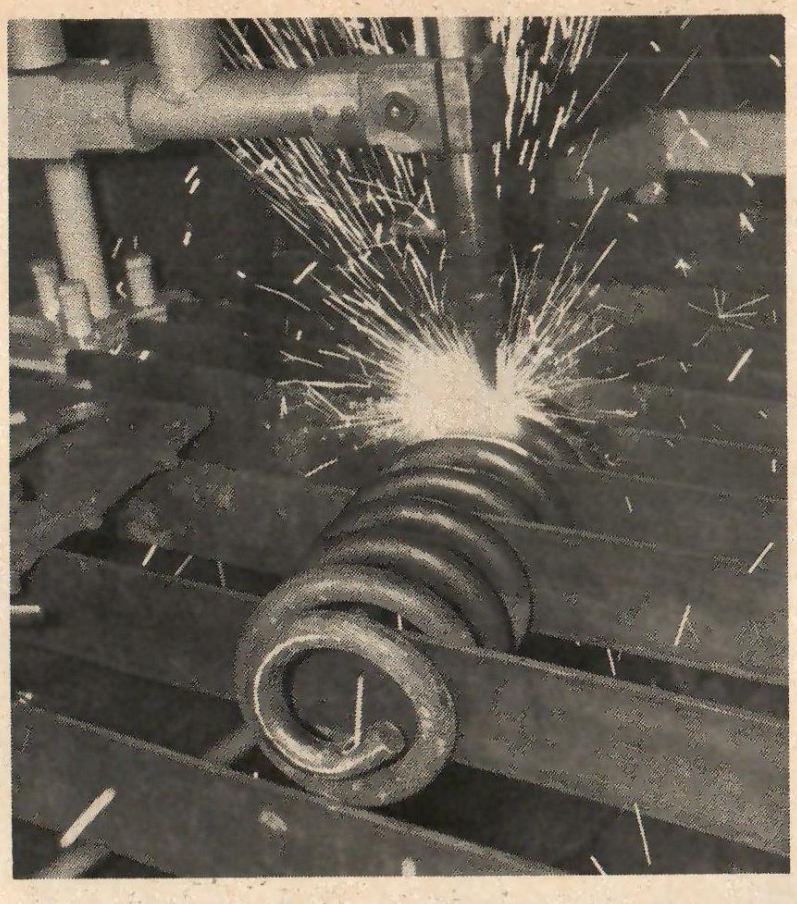


ABOVE — The Specialty Cars lowering kit includes everything you'll need to get your late model Chevy pickup down on the ground.

Once the decision has been made to lower a truck with the kit, there are several things that must be taken into consideration. First of all, if your pickup

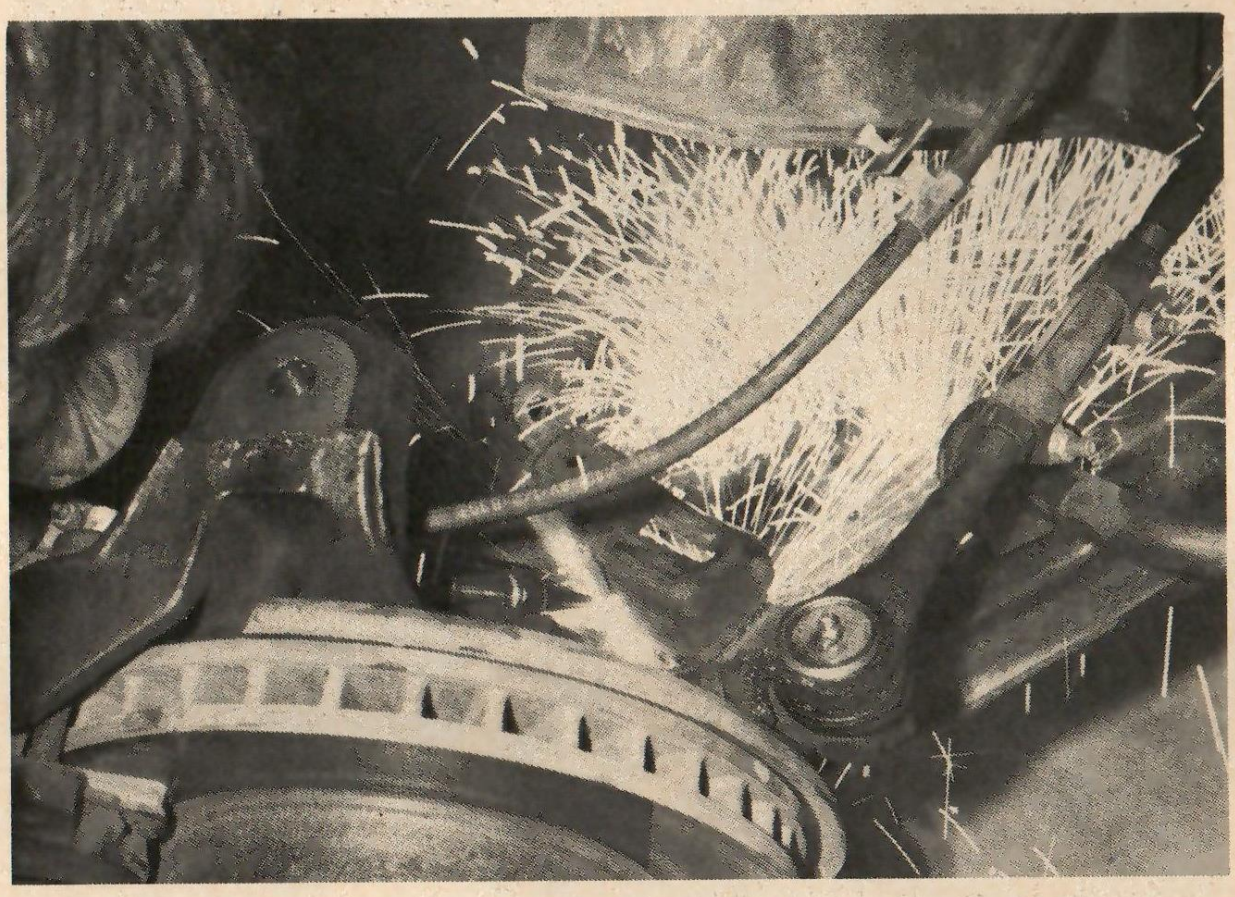
BELOW—The first step is to separate the spindle from the upper ball-joint. Then lower the lower A-arm with a jack and remove the spring. Careful, don't stress the brake hose.

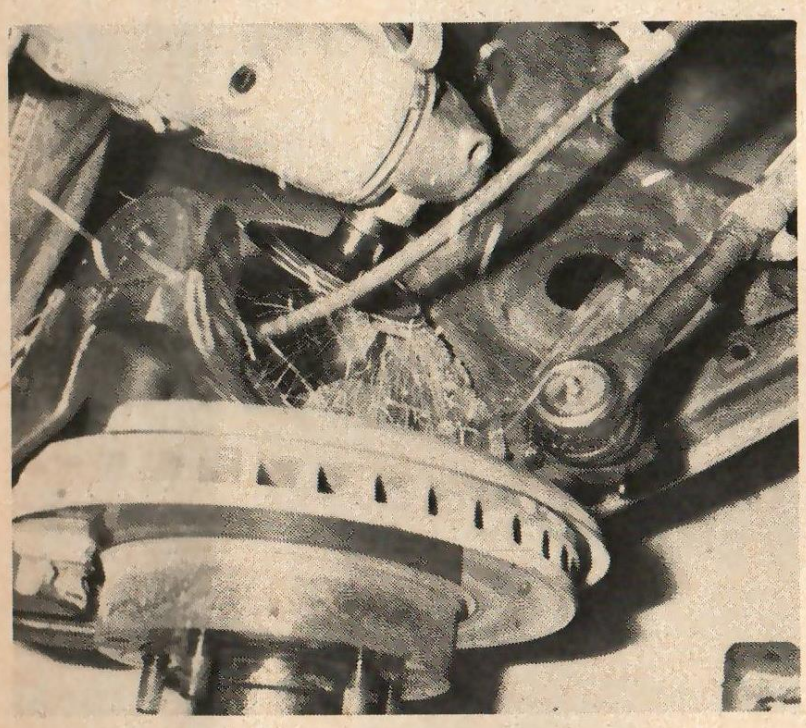




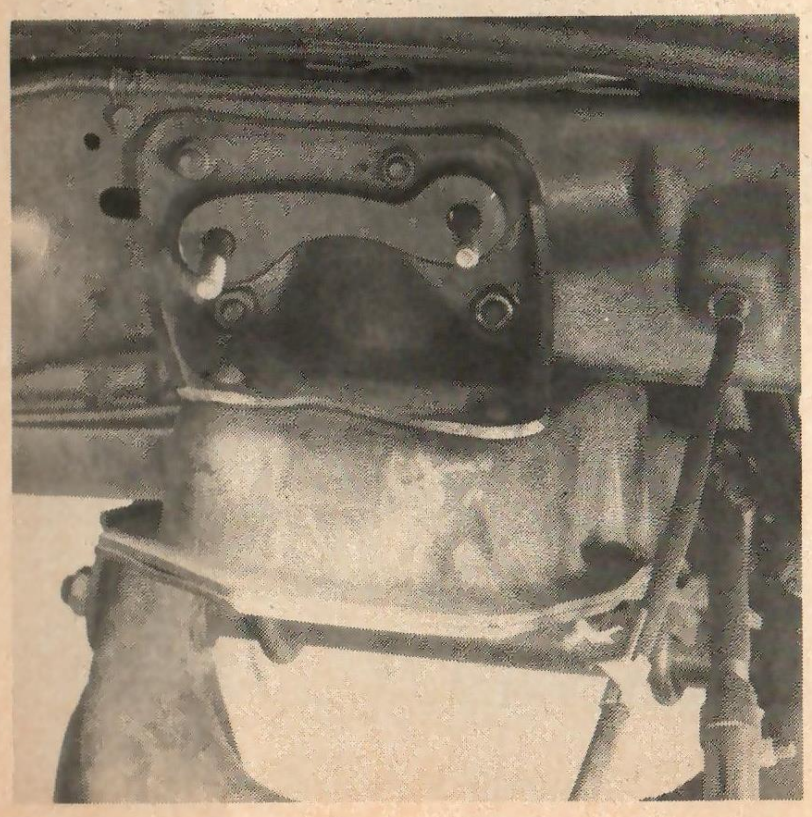
LEFT—Specialty Cars uses a flame cutter to cut the front coils. Tom suggests that you start by taking out 1½ coils. If it doesn't lower the truck enough, try a little more. But under no circumstances does he recommend cutting more than two coils.

BELOW—The lowered suspension will cause interference at the steering stop. Tom trims the stop but does not remove it. The lower A-arm could be removed and transported to a welder if you don't have a torch.



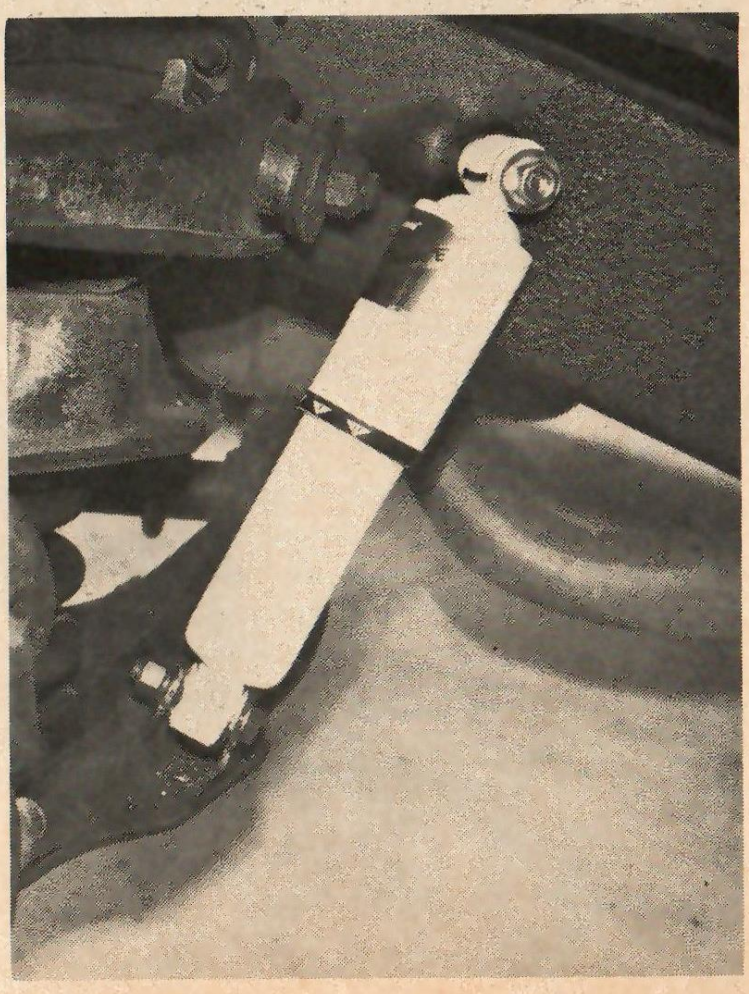


ABOVE LEFT—After you put away the torch, breakout a grinder to clean up the area. Tom then puts a full weld bead along the weakened steering stop since at the factory, it was only spot welded in place.



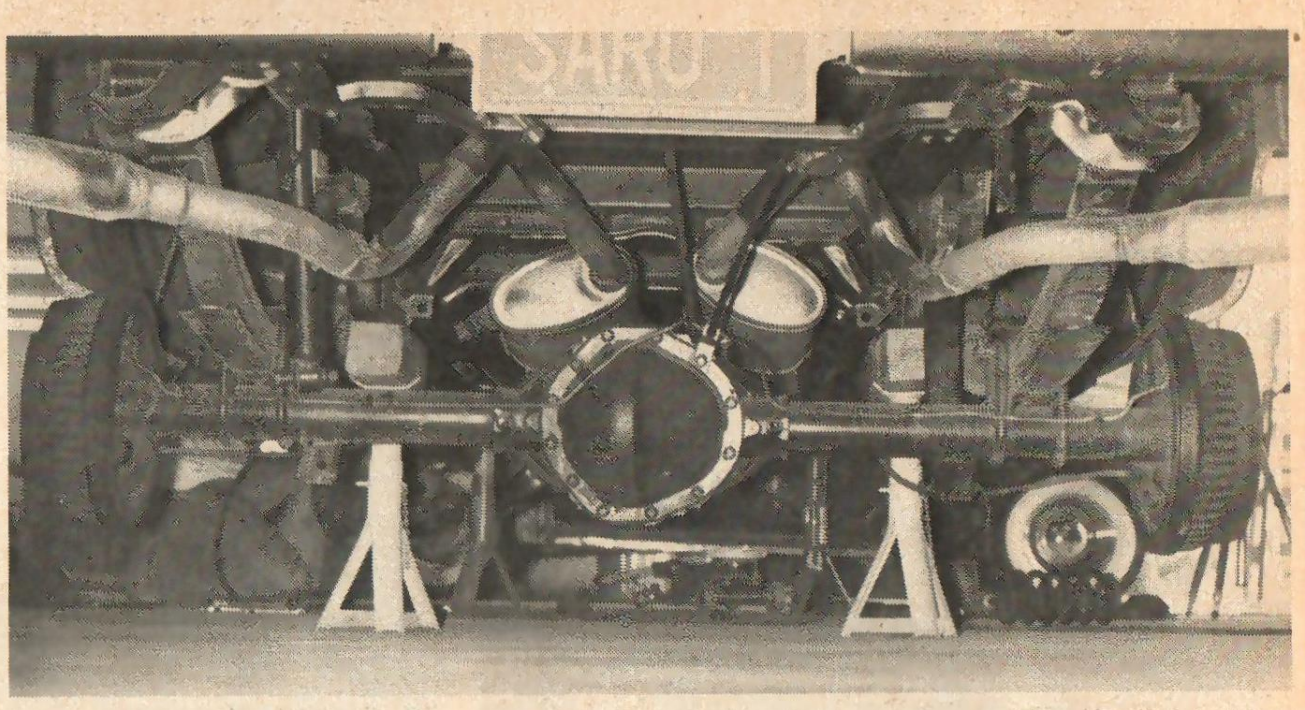
LEFT—At this point, the front suspension can be reassembled. The upper A-arms are moved out using the two spacers and longer bolts in the kit. With the spacer and bolts in place, the A-arm can be slid back into place.

RIGHT—Installing the kit-supplied shocks is no more difficult than bolting up a set of stockers. Both mounting points stay the same, they've just been moved closer together. A shorter shock is used since the stockers will bottom out.

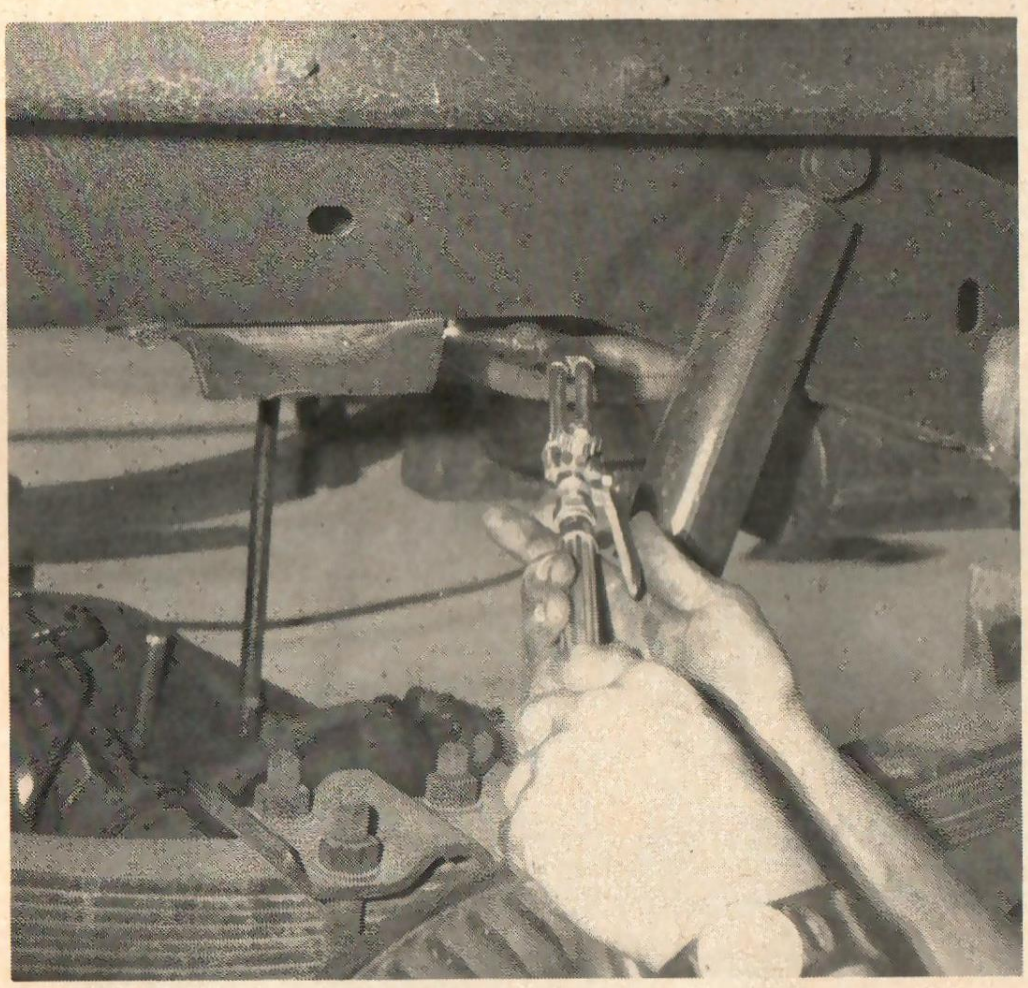


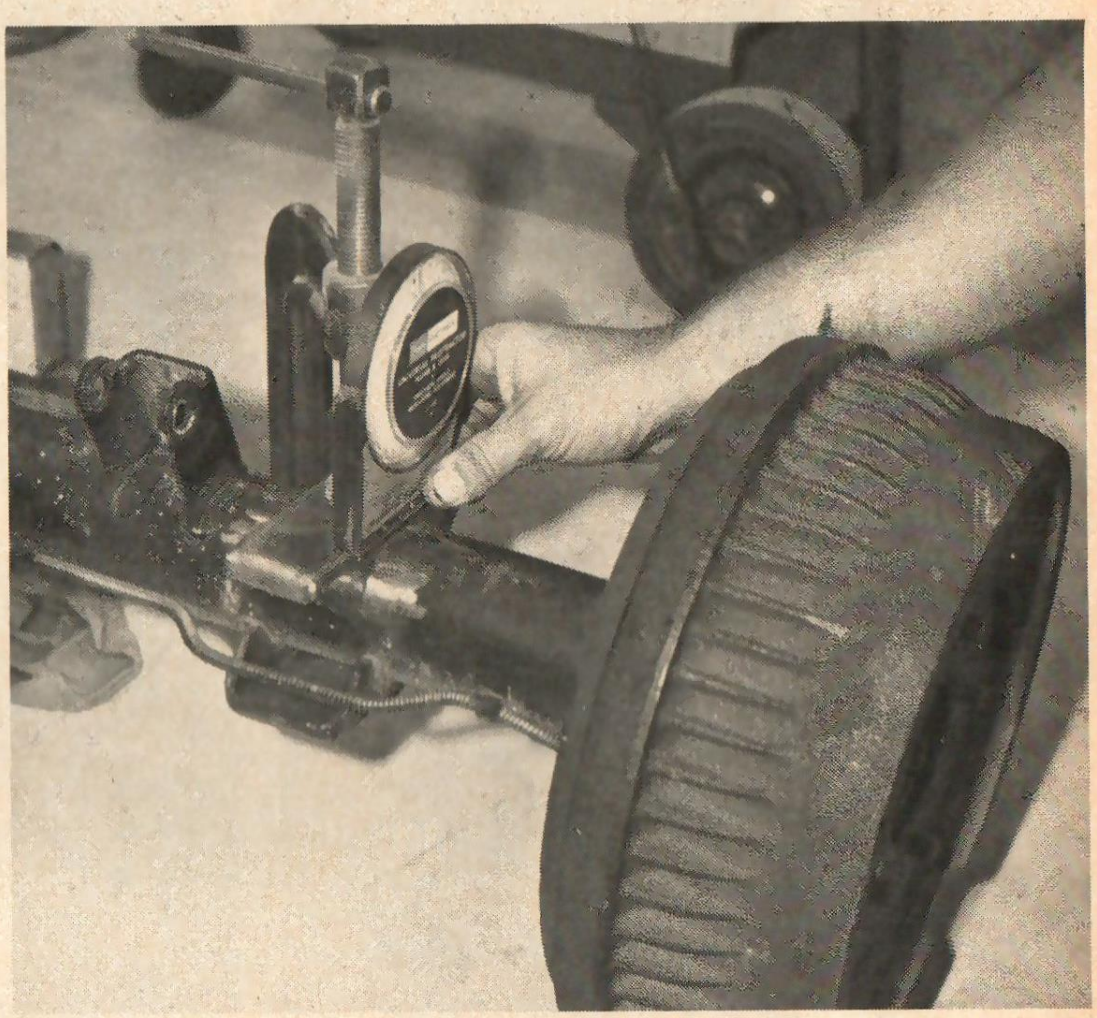
RIGHT—On the stock set-up, the rear end mounts below the springs. Specialty Cars lowers trucks by putting the rear on top of the rear springs.

TRUCK LOWERING



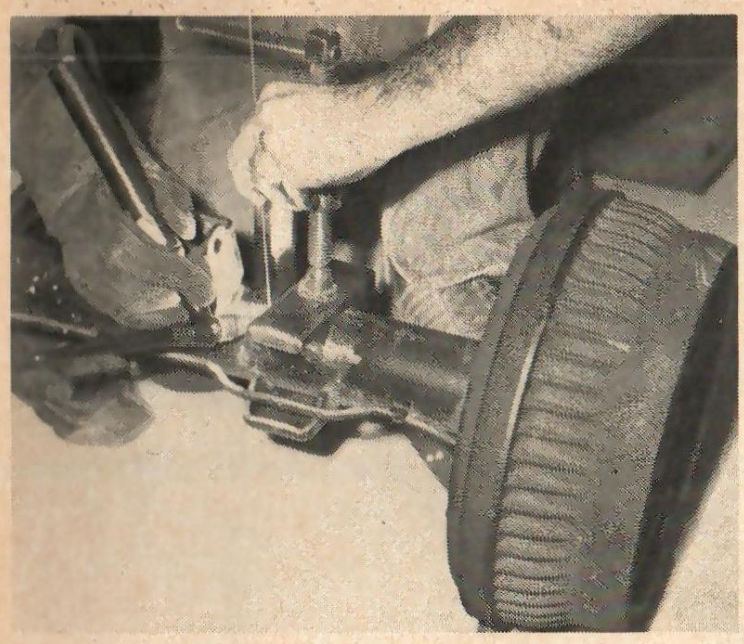
BELOW—First step in the rearend modifications is to remove suspension bumpers. Steve did it with a cutting torch, but a grinder would work just as well.





ABOVE—The spring perches supplied in the Specialty Cars kit are positioned opposite the stock ones. Steve uses a level to make sure everything checks out before welding.

is equipped with a big block motor, it has a two-piece driveshaft. Lowering the rear causes length and pinion angle problems with the two-piece shaft. To cure the problem, Tom and Steve offer a one piece unit that is a direct replacement for the stock two-piece model. The lowering job can't be completed without some torch work. The parts that need to be cut are the front coils and the steering stops on the lower A-arms. Both the coils and the A-arms are easily removed and the cutting could be farmed out without hauling your truck to a welding shop. Go conservatively when cutting the front springs. Removing 1½ to 1¾ coils should lower the front aproximately 3½ inches. Under no circumstances does Tom recommend cutting more than two coils from the front springs.

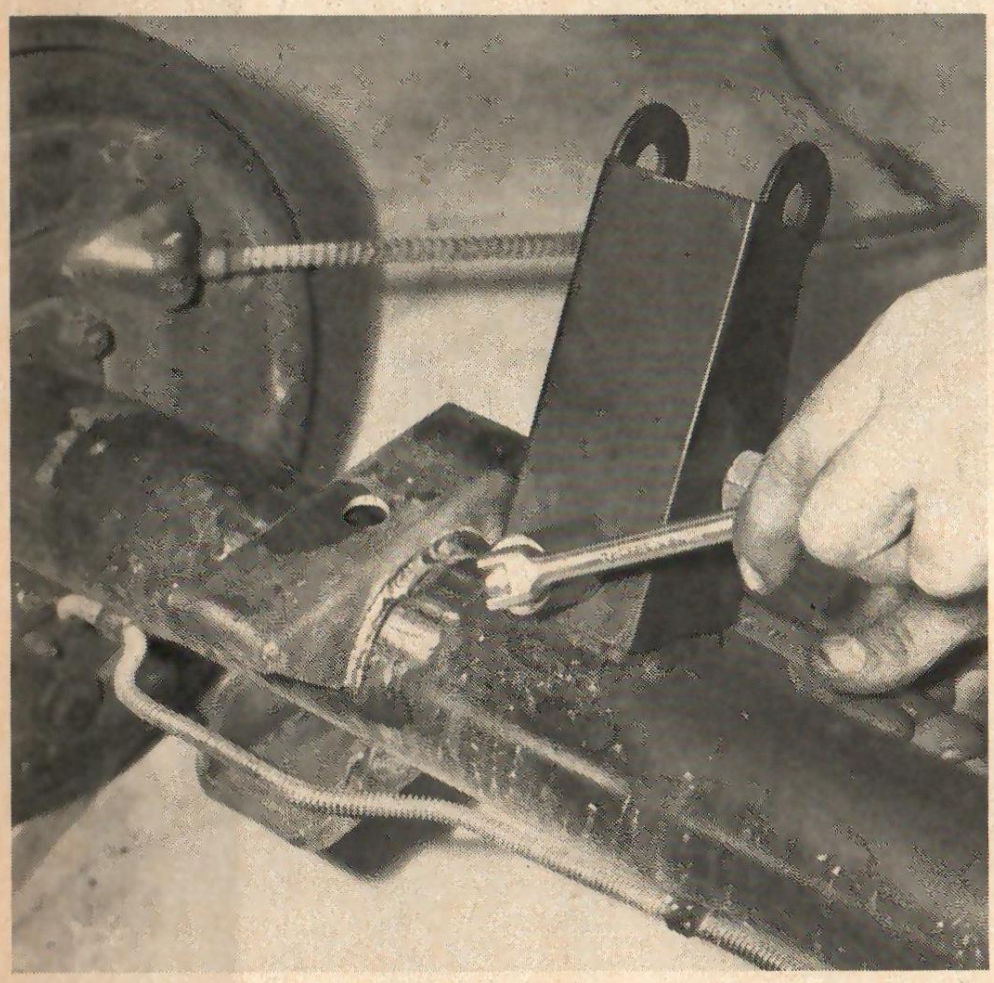


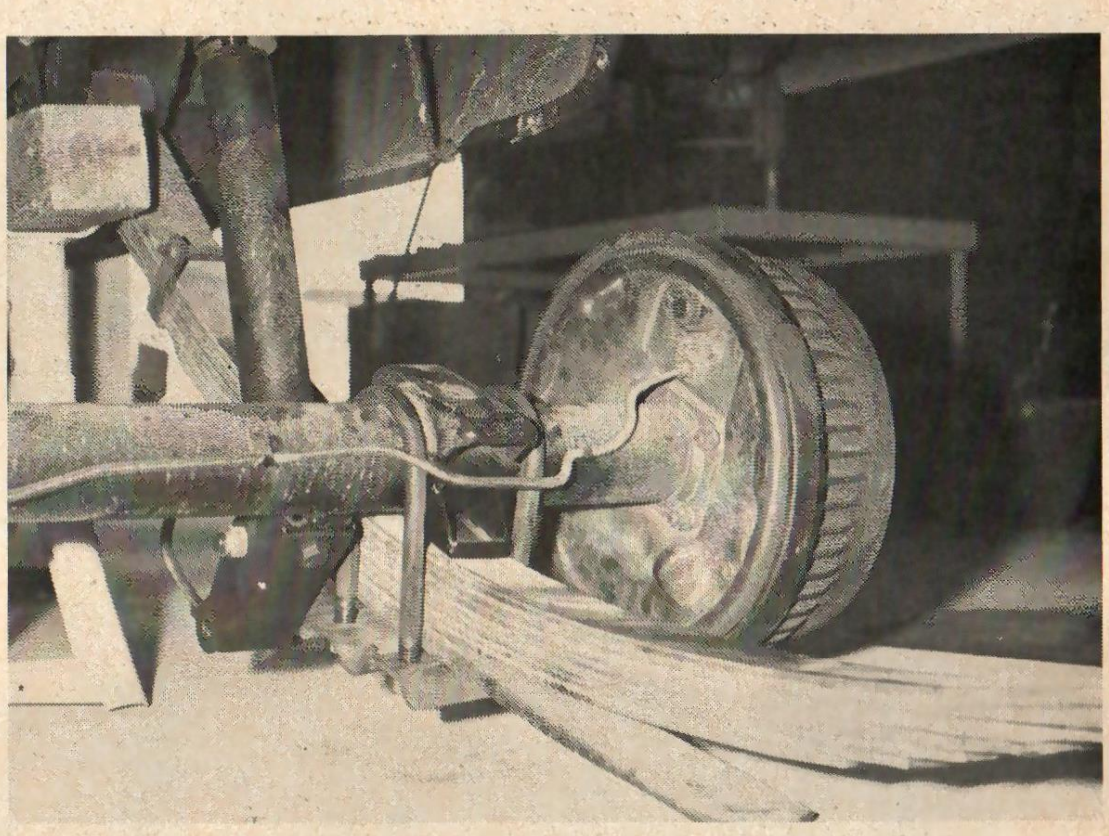
ABOVE—Specialty Cars uses a heli-arc to do the welding, but any form of arc welding will work.

BELOW—The supplied stock extensions simply bolt over the existing mounts. Any stock length shock will fit, even air shocks.

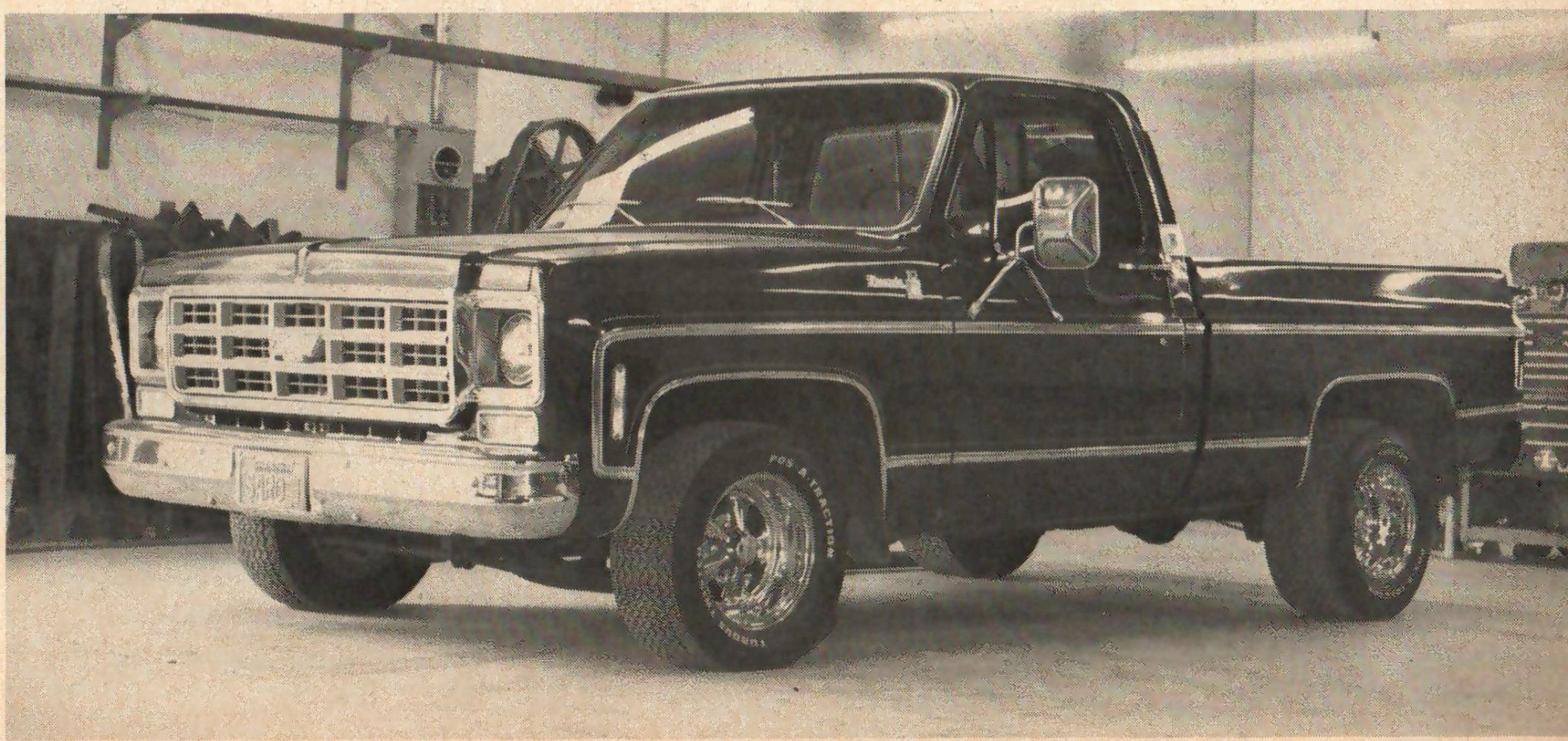
The Specialty Cars method of lowering trucks isn't the cheapest or the simplest, but it does get the job done without the usual ill effects. Tom and Steve were quick to point out that while their's wasn't the only way, there are several "short cuts" that should be avoided. Heating the coils is definitely one of them. The heat will ruin the temper in the spring steel, turning it into ordinary steel. A heated spring will also build up a lot sooner than a stock or cut one. Lowering the rear by removing lots of rear spring leaves can also cause problems. Without close to the stock number of leaves, the amount of weight you can carry in the bed will be greatly reduced.

If you would like to get your pickup out of the sky, but don't want to give away all the ride comfort or have your high dollar radials wear out in two or three thousand miles, contact the guys at Specialty Cars. They'd be more than happy to lower your truck in their shop or mail-order you one of the kits. At $99.50, the kit sounds to us like a real bargain.



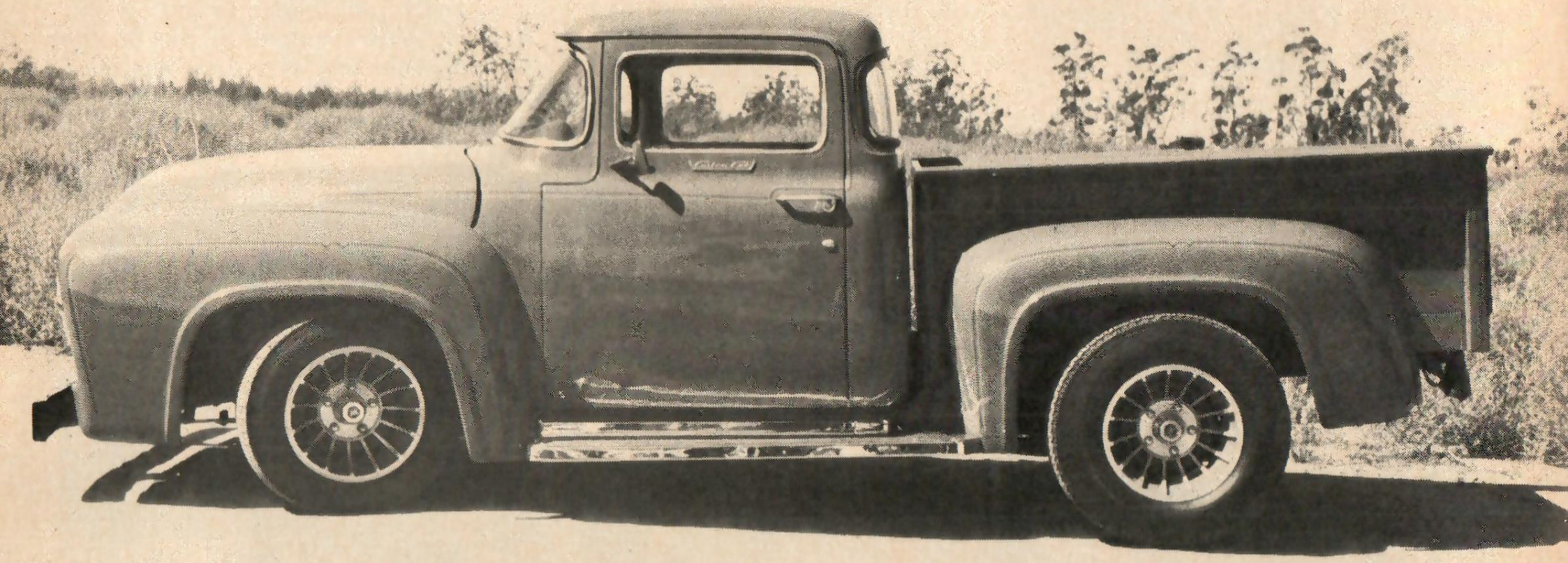


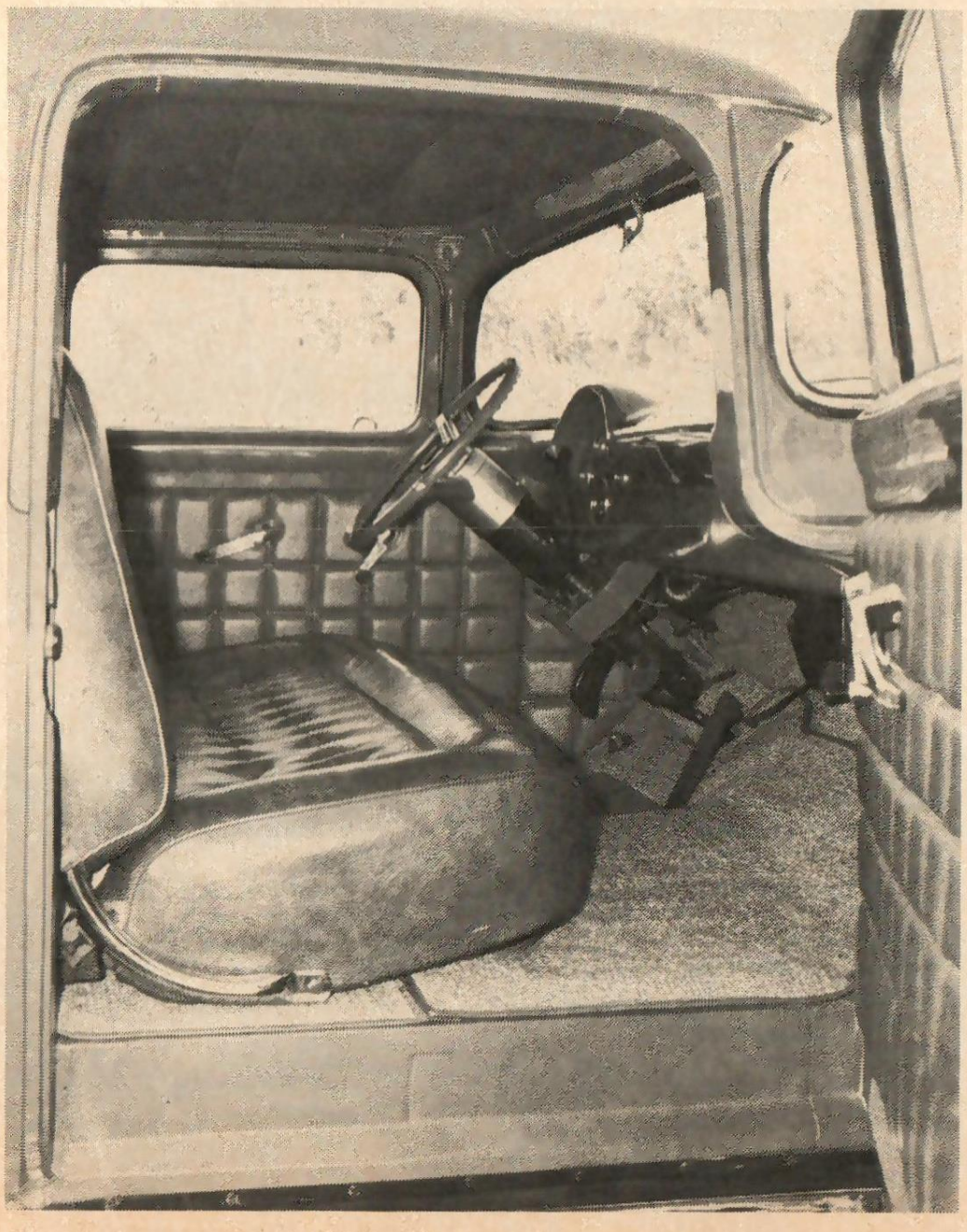
With the rearend bolted to the springs (above), jack up the housing until the springs line up with the shackles. The comparison between stock and lowered is dramatic. The owner of the truck shown requested that the truck sit level when done. As a normal rule, Specialty Cars likes to set the trucks on a slight rake. A short drive proved that the ride was as good as stock.



Dave Hayward's chopped, shortened, and sectioned F-100 is definitely a . . .

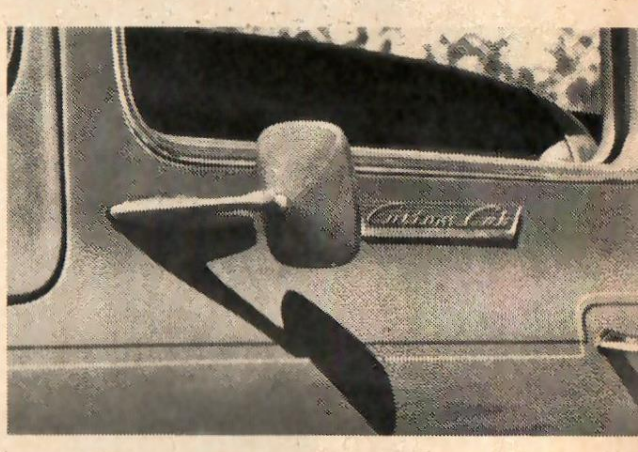
LOW RIDE

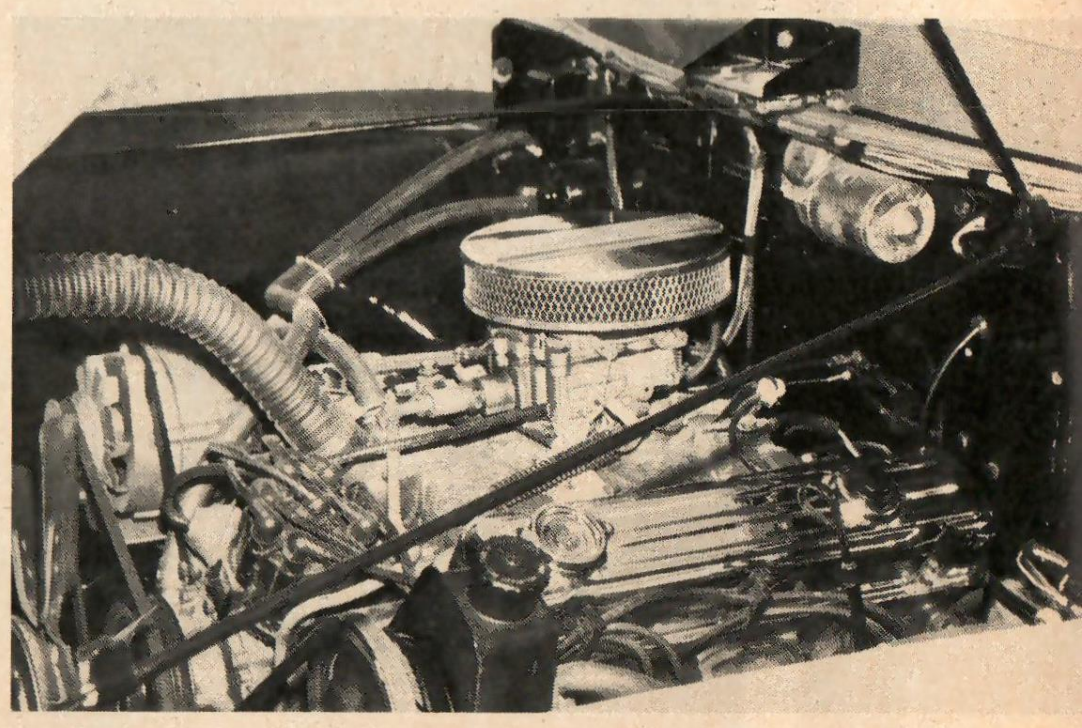




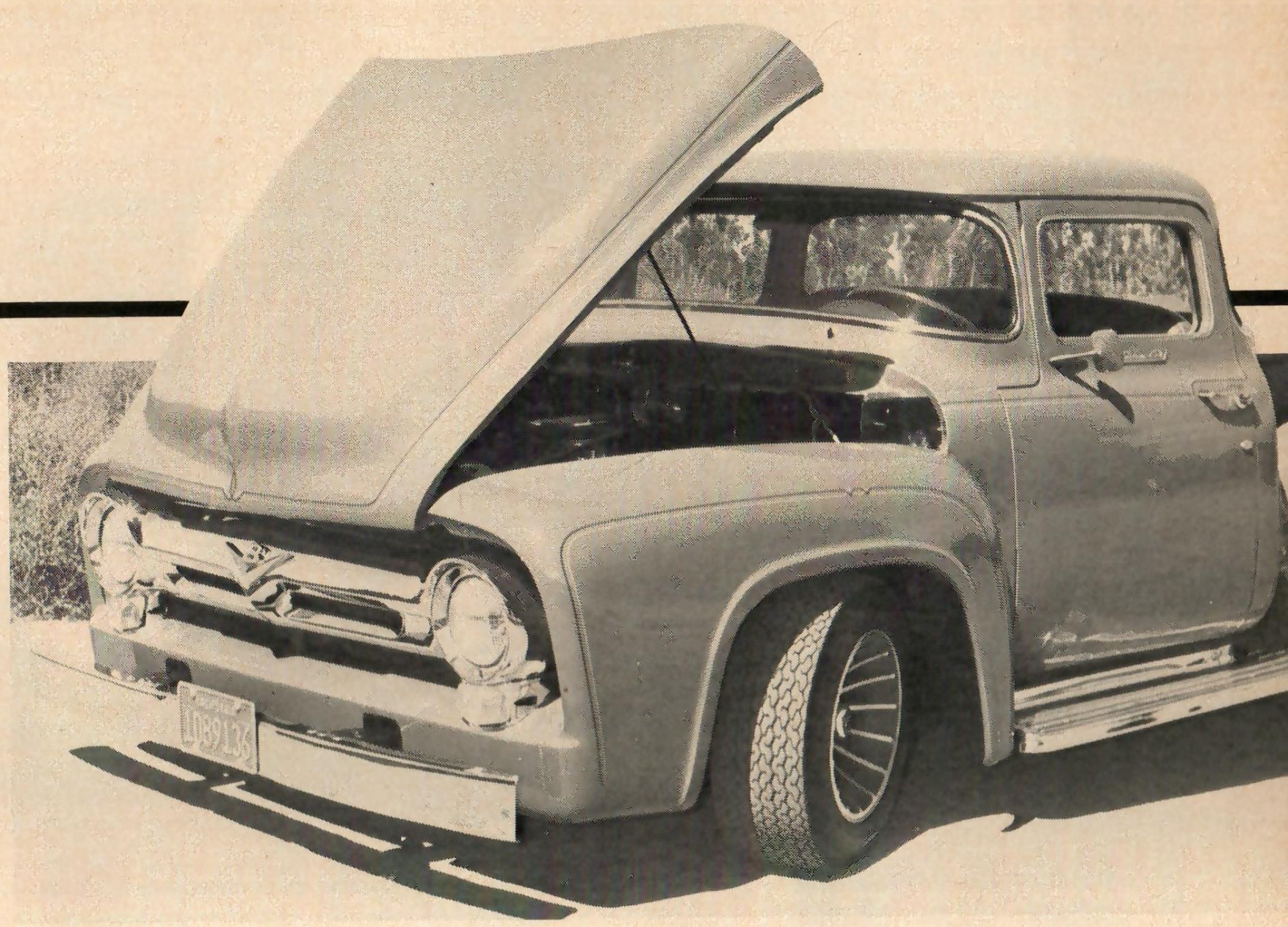
LEFT — The shortened interior features the stitch work of Kaizer Upholstery. Brown naugahyde was sewn in square tufts. Even with the chop and section the cab is still plenty roomy. The section improves vision, which is a problem in chopped trucks.

RIGHT — Dave looked for the smallest outside mirror he could find. Late Vega unit was chosen.

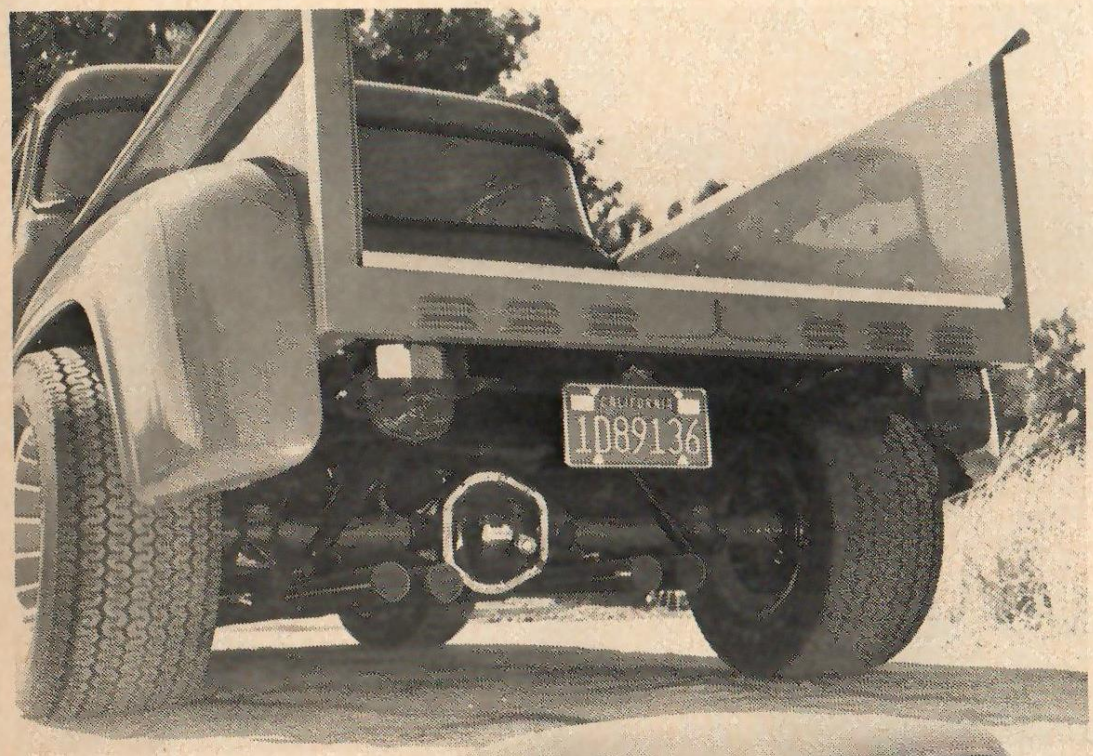


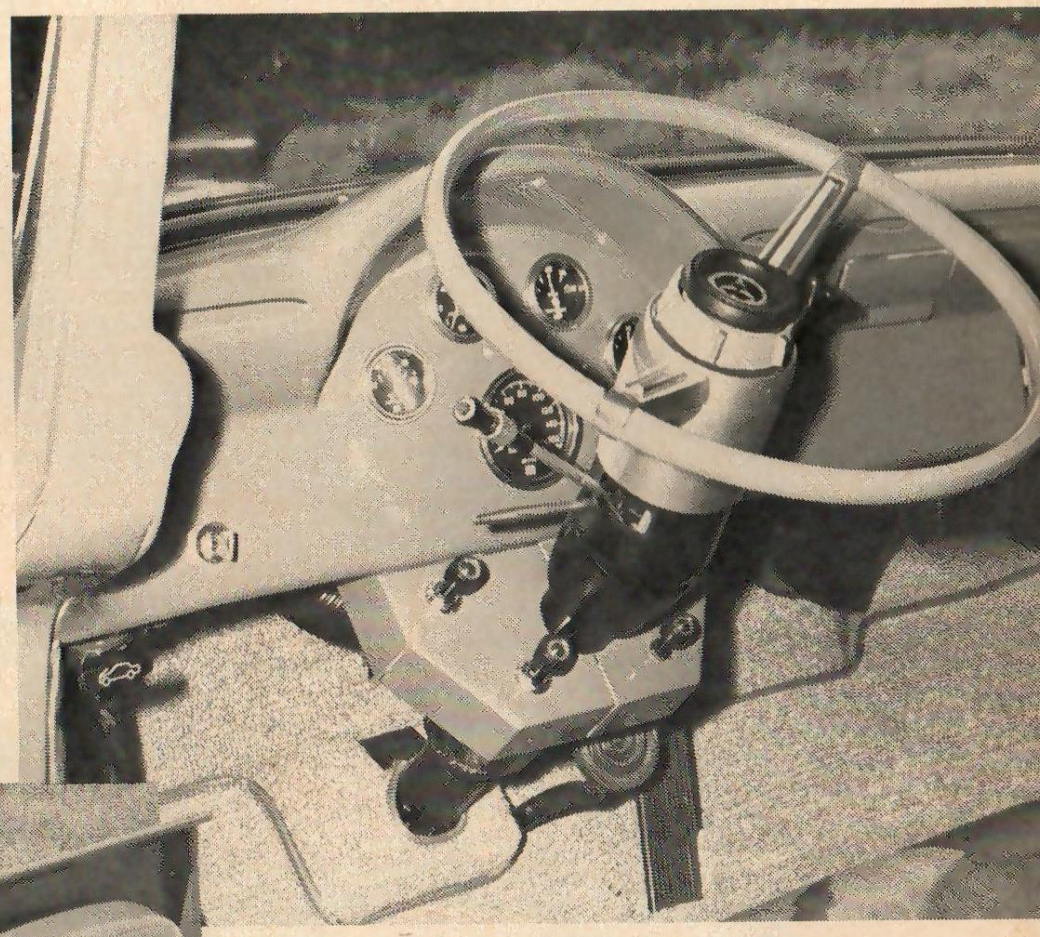


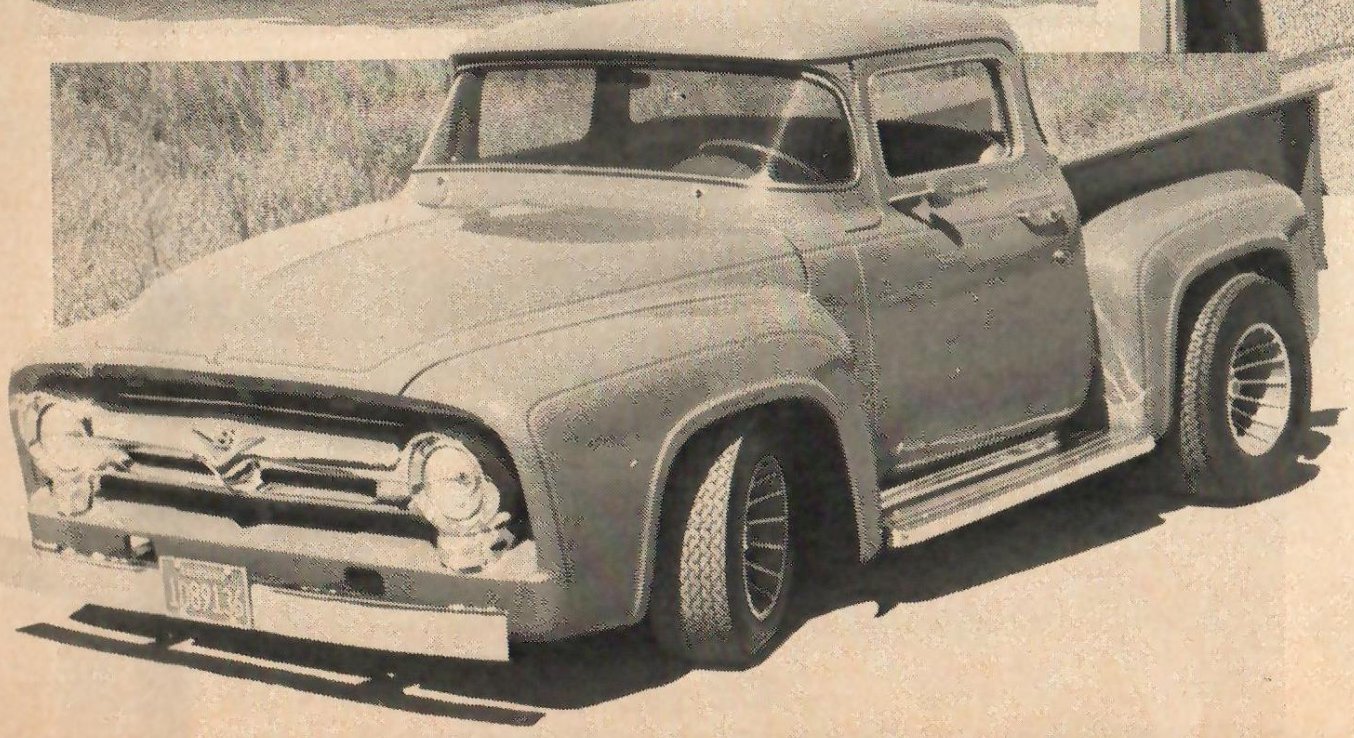
ABOVE — The truck is more of a custom than a high performance machine so Dave left the late 350 Buick motor stock. Changes were limited to chroming and detailing. When the truck was nearly new, it got a big Hemi for power, Dave favored the Buick.



Even with all the changes, Dave's '56 is nearly new. Mileage since '56 is less than 5,000. It was on the street briefly under Hemi power, but has been off the road (while the chop, section and shortened bed were being completed) until Dave acquired it. It took him until early '76 to put back on the street in its present form. Creighton of Chula Vista, California was responsible for the major bodywork. Finish work and the Monza red lacquer is Dave's work. One look tells you that it was worth the twenty years of building time.







ABOVE — Stewart Warners' fit nicely in the molded dash. Tilt and telescoping column from a Dodge Monaco, hooks to a Buick power steering box. A Monaco shifter actuates the turbo hydro.

ABOVE LEFT — The shortened bed features a louvered rear panel. Stock rear runs 3.78 gears, chrome cover, and red paint. The quad exhaust tips look mean.

LEFT — Low clean look comes from the body mods, filled seams, simple paint treatment, and the lack of gaudy accessories. Running boards were shortened to match bed, then chromed.

Truckin'

photography: Steve Coonan

Dave Hayward
El Cajon, California

LOW RIDE

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The model manufacturers are now offering all sorts of 1/25th scale kits just for truckers.

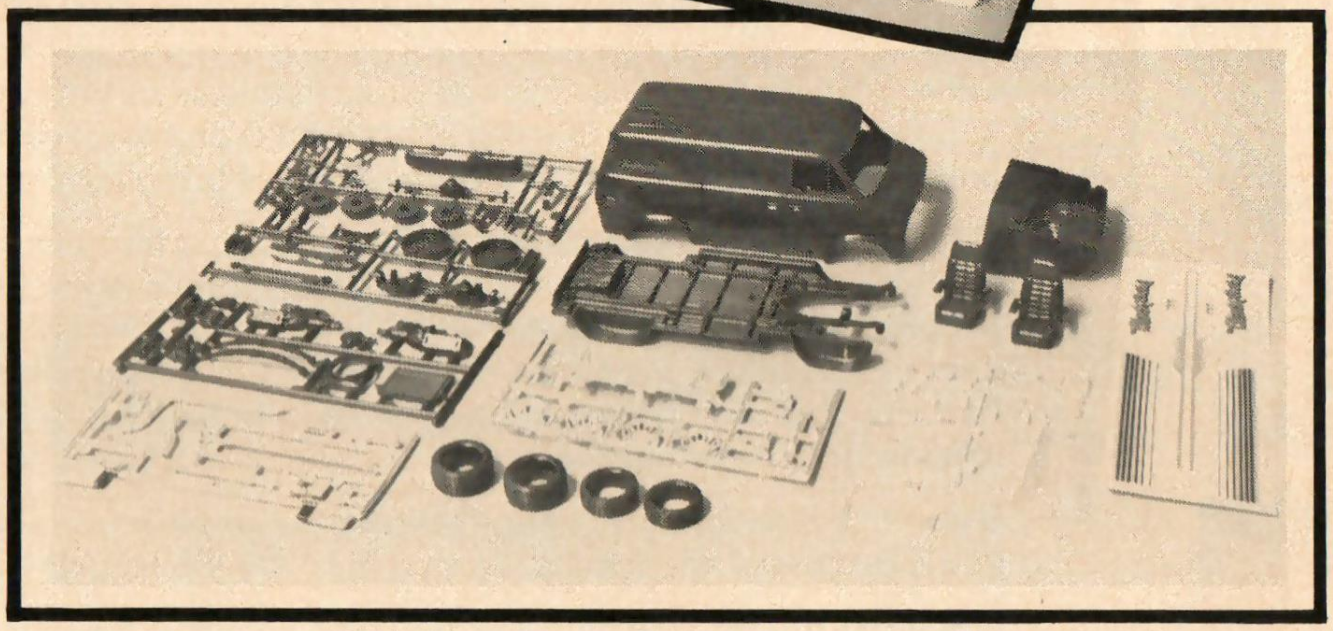


TABLE TOP TRUCKIN'

by Pat Ganahl

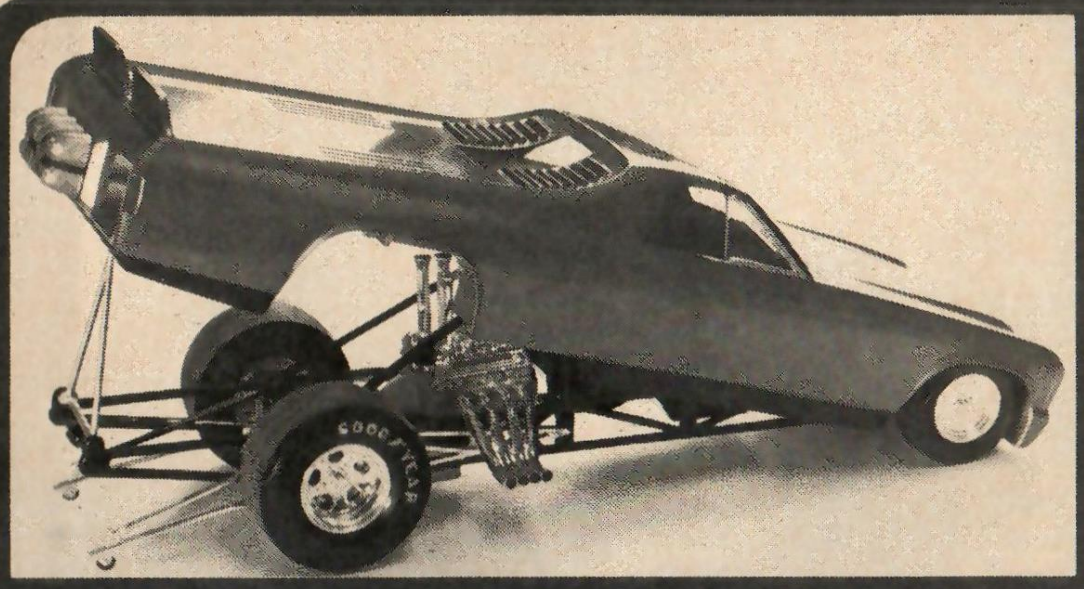
Lots of people think plastic scale models are for kids. Well they are; but not *just* for kids.

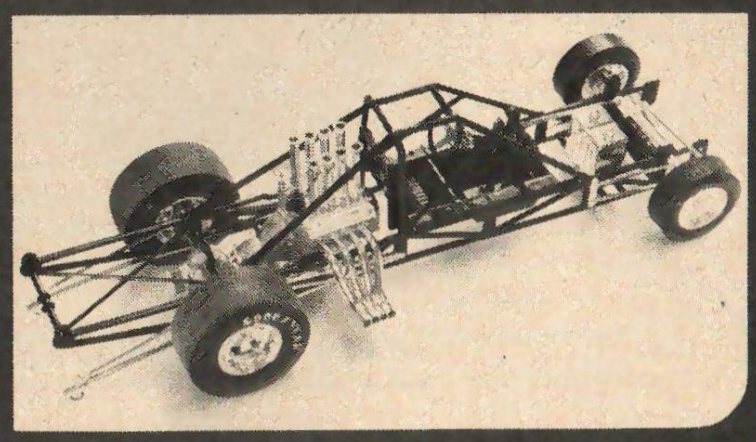
Just about every hot rodder spends a period, before he has a real car to work on, turning his wildest fantasies into reality of a sort in 1/25th scale plastic. Not only does this hobby afford satisfaction to the model builder, but it also gives a future real car builder some valuable training. Just about every technique used in building a plastic model kit can be applied in one way or another to the building of a full-sized vehicle. Spray painting, brush enameling, sanding, filling, smoothing, cutting and fitting parts togehter are all little tricks that will be handy later. Likewise choosing inside and outside color schemes, planning and executing modifications, and learning how to make something work a different way when it won't go as originally planned are the same steps taken when customizing a van or truck.

But who says you've got to quit building models when you get your driver's license? If building pickups and vans in miniature is helpful to a would-be trucker, it stands to reason that the same applies to everybody, regardless of age. Let's say you drove home a brand new Chevy van, completely stock. Obviously you intend to trick it up, and you probably have a few things in mind —but do you really have a plan for modifications, and are you sure how good they are going to look? A full custom paint job for a van can be very expensive, and you don't really want simply to give it to the painter and say, "Do your own thing."

Now painting model cars or vans isn't easy. In fact, it is probably the most difficult part of building a nice model. But after a little practice with spray cans and masking tape, you can get good enough to work out a reasonable facsimile of a custom paint design on your mini-van (and if you mess up once, it's very easy to sand down and paint again — or even to buy another kit for a couple of bucks). When you arrive at a design that you like, you can take the model to the painter and say, "Here, this is what I want."

Same goes for the interior. There is simply no limit to what you can do to the inside of a van, and sometimes that total freedom is inhibiting to your imagination when you are looking at empty painted corrugated steel. Drawing floor plans on paper is a start, but it doesn't show you how the insides are actually going to look. If you want an archway, an alcove, a bar, a table, or whatever, you can quickly fashion them out of balsa wood, cardboard, paper,





ABOVE — This isn't exactly the sort of truck you'd be driving to high school. Monogram's 1/24th scale El Camino is a wild rear-engined "reverse flopper."

ABOVE RIGHT — I built this kit basically the way it comes. Color is Pagan Gold candy with flat black trim. Headers and injectors have been shortened.

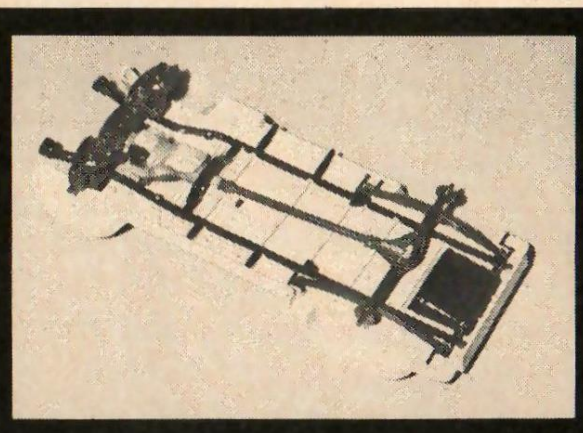
RIGHT — The space-tube chassis has lots of detail and looks impressive by itself. Obviously plastic models don't have to be like real cars.

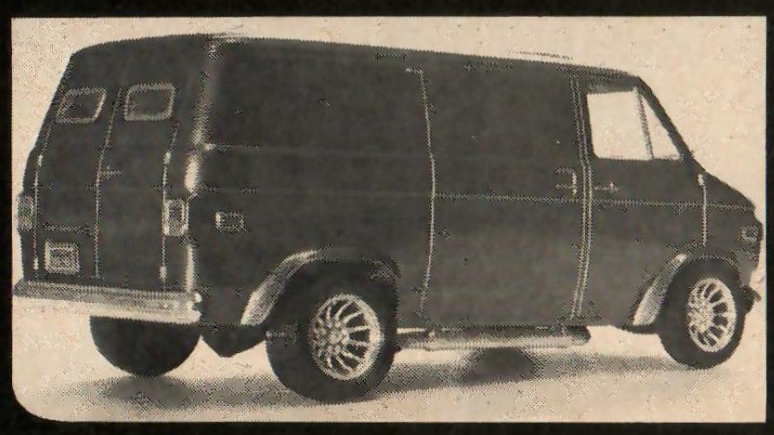
and various pieces of cloth to experiment with combinations inside your model. If you don't like the way it looks, just tear it out and start over. Oftentimes you know exactly what color you want to paint the outside of your new car or truck, but you can't decide on a good color for the interior. Try a few different ones on a model, and see how the combinations work.

Body modifications often pose the same sort of dilemma, especially on something as big and as slab-sided as a van. Any change you make is going to stand out, so you want it to look good. Fender flares, spoilers, air dams, portholes — all are pretty basic modifications with pretty basic shapes. They are very easy to try out on models, using either scraps of plastic, wood, paper, or special model body filler which can be sanded and shaped just like plastic filler on a real car. If you are planning any drastic body changes, like chopping a top or adding IMSA-type fender pods, I would strongly suggest trying out the design in miniature first. This is the way all the professional designers do it. And if a major modification like a chopped top doesn't turn out right the first time . . . well, that's a pretty expensive mistake on a real vehicle.

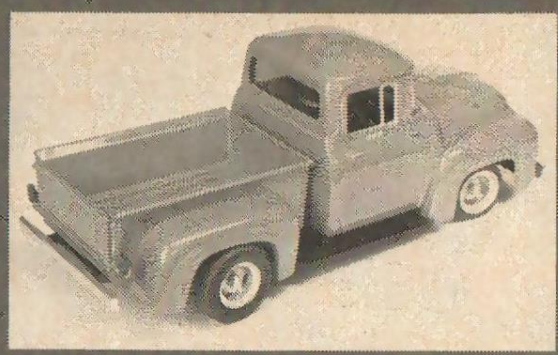
But you have probably already heard the pitch about the practicality of building and customizing models as a way to plan for your real car. What this argument usually boils down to is a good excuse for having fun doing something you are supposed to have outgrown years ago. One of the best things about model building is that it still isn't expensive (like so many other pastimes or hobbies have become). While you

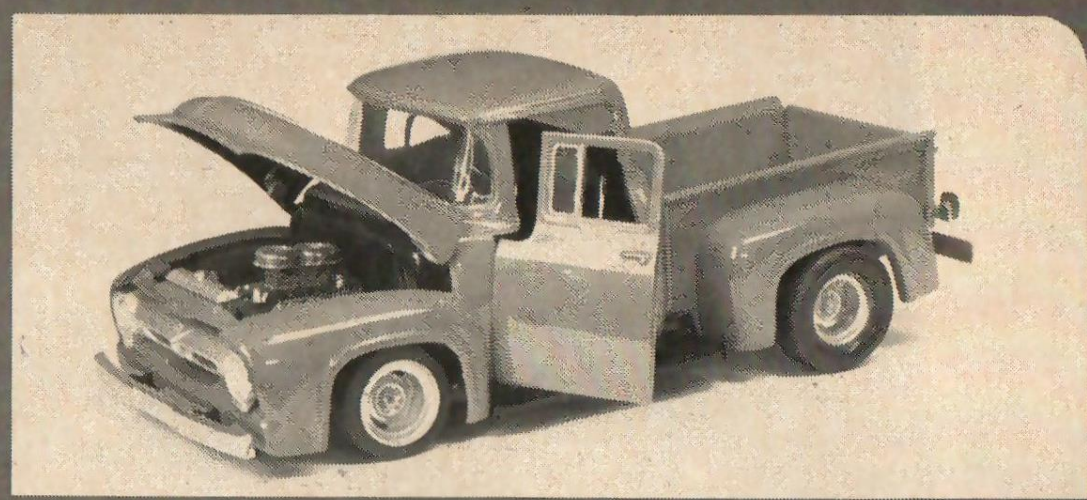
Simply painted and detailed, Monogram's Chevy van looks amazingly realistic (see cover photo). The color is candy Tangerine with tan interior and orange undercarriage.





This van comes with a realistic chassis including separate front and rear suspensions and a smallblock Chevy V-8. The hood could easily be cut open to reveal a detailed engine, as could the side or rear doors for a handmade interior in the back. Flares, sunroof, portholes, pipes, and wheels come with kit.





ABOVE — I built this one many years ago, but Revell still offers the '56 F-100. Hood, doors, and tailgate operate. This one has been lowered quite a bit.

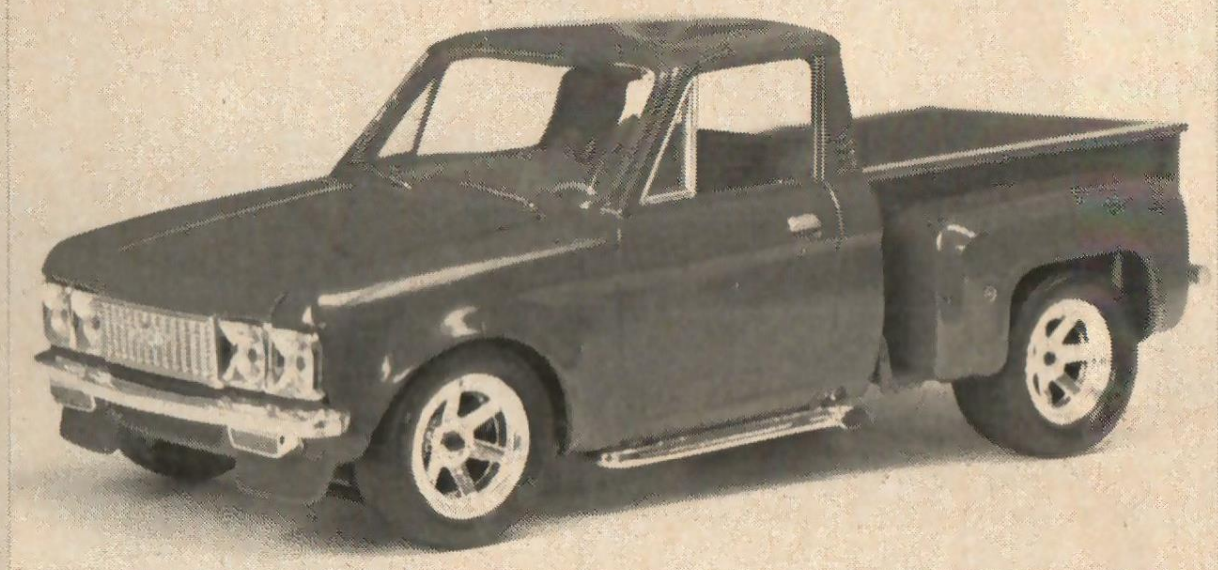
ABOVE LEFT — I used chrome tape for bed runners, dark blue plastic for tinted back window. The exterior color is bright orange enamel.

LEFT — I kept the bed and body detachable to show off Chrysler hemi engine (early Revell accessory packs), bucket seats, stock rear.

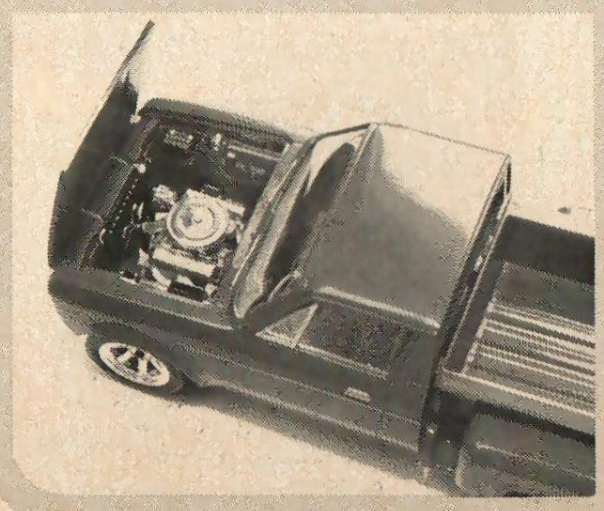
are saving up for a custom paint job for your van, or while you are saving up for the van itself, you can let loose on these little table top customs and it's not going to cost you much more than some of your "free" time.

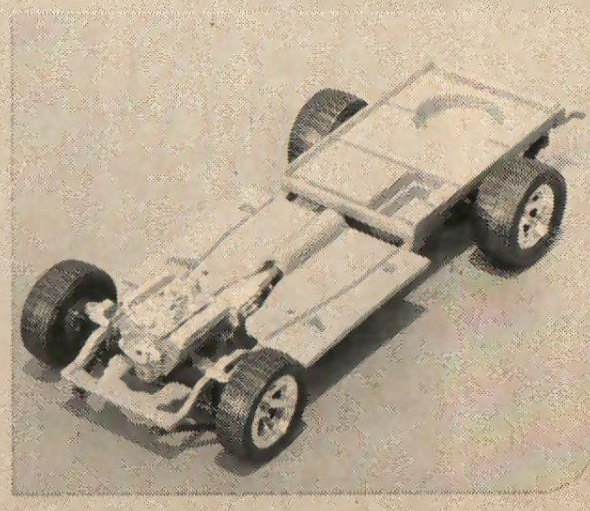
If you are into truckin' and you think you might like to try out your wild ideas on some little plastic vans, pickups, mini-trucks, or even big rigs I strongly suggest you pay a visit to your local hobby shop and look at the wide selection of kits now available. Shown on these pages are some new releases from Monogram — a Chevy van, a crazy El Camino rear-engined funny car, and a popular Chevy LUV pickup complete with a California Step Side bed and a Chevy V-8 engine swap. The Ford F-100 pickup is an oldie by Revell, but is still available, as is a '53 F-100 by AMT. Each of the major model manufacturers — Monogram, AMT, MPC, Revell — offers several truck and van kits, along with their regular lines of hot rods, drag cars, late model stockers, and so on. If you like the older panel trucks and sedan deliveries, there are several of these being offered; and be sure to look over the large selection of extremely realistic tractor and trailer combinations now being produced.

Buy a couple of kits, switch some of the parts around, design your own components, and in general let your imagination run free. It might turn out a little messy the first time around (or the first time again in several years?). But don't get discouraged — even little kids can do it well! If you finally put one together that really looks good, why not send us a photo of it so we can show other truckin' enthusiasts what the table top truckers are up to these days?



Mini truckers will love Monogram's new Luv Stepsider. They know what's happening — the kit comes complete with a Chevy V-8 and four speed, a California Stepside bed, flared front fenders and spoiler, and chromed off-road spoker wheels. Small changes to the kit include smoothing off emblems and parking lights and molding in the "bolt-on" flares. The engine compartment is stock except for paint detailing and a chrome air cleaner.





The crew at Odessey Auto Body shows us how to make . . .

FLARES

About the first custom addition to a van is a set of mag wheels and fat tires. And with this setup, mini-fenders, or flares, are installed shortly thereafter. Besides looking good, flares really help stop rocks, dirt and other road garbage from defacing the sides of a van. In some states, if you have tires protruding past the stock flares, the law requires mudflaps or flares.

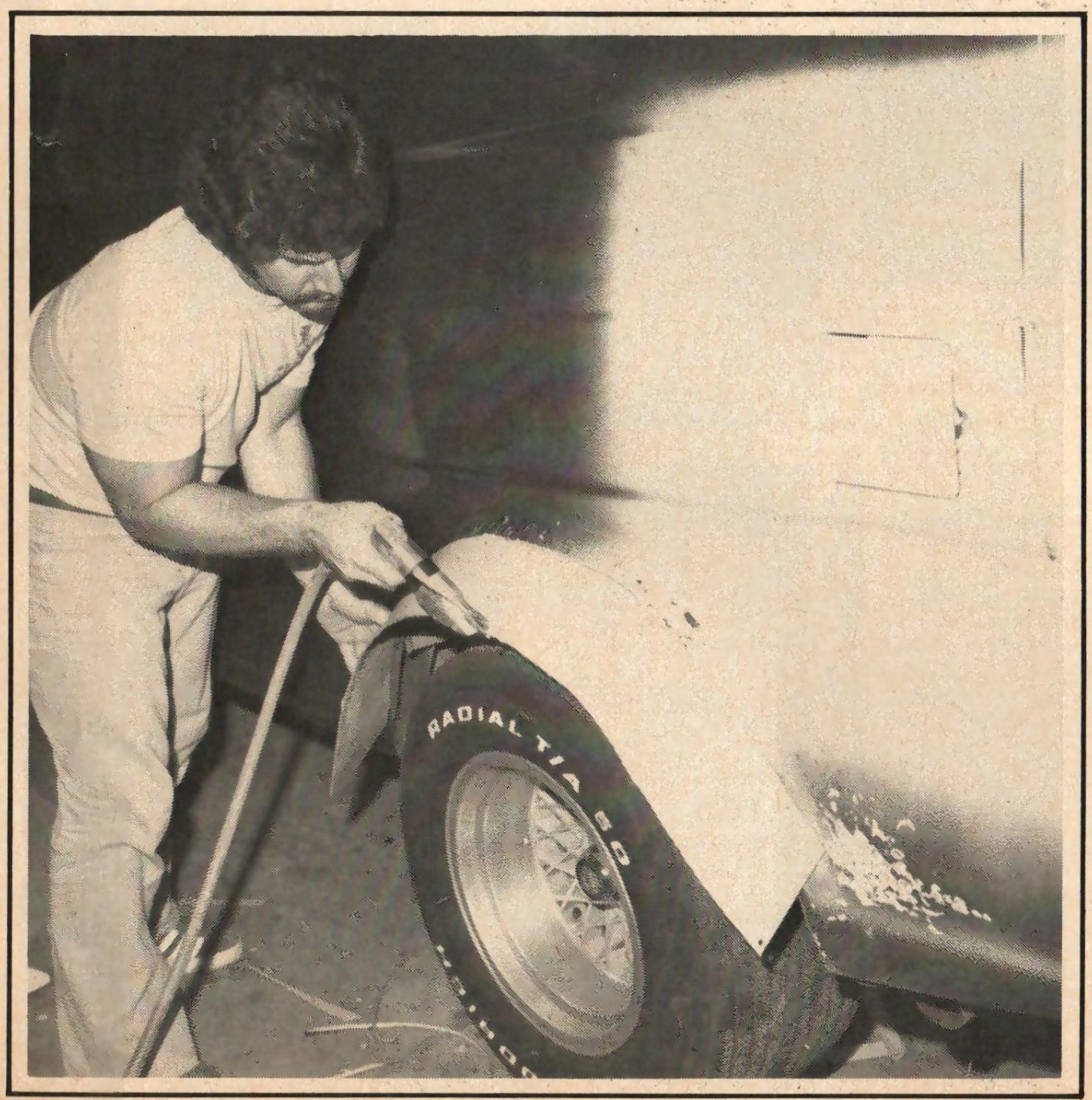
There are all kinds of aftermarket flares around. For the most part, these custom flares are bolted on, or in some cases molded in. But sometimes, these custom bolt-on flares won't work, especially if you lower the van. So you have to either cut out a bigger wheel well opening and leave it looking ugly, or make your own flares. The latter is usually what most van owners practice.

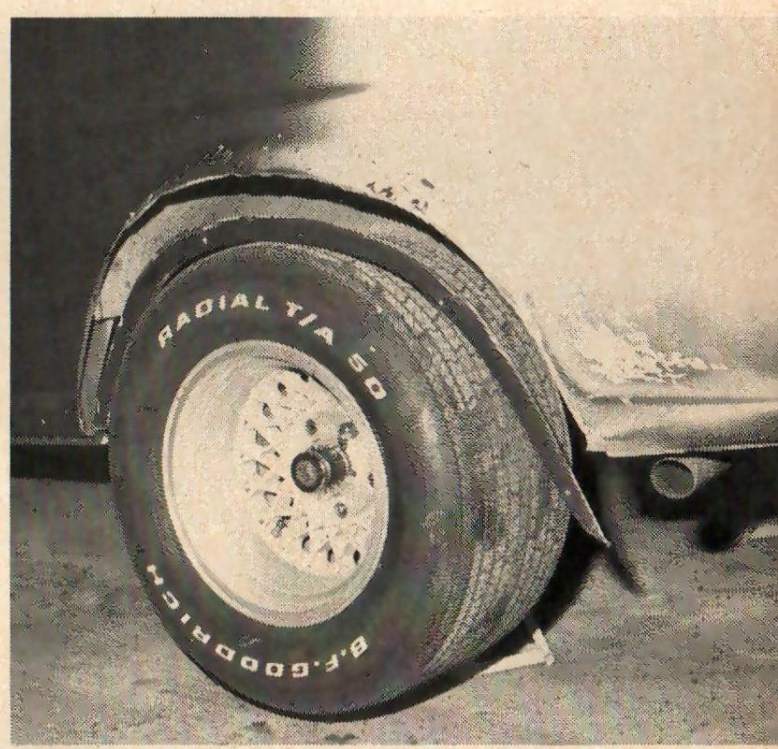
John Bruno of Odessey Auto Body in Orange, California likes to custom make things for vans. While we were there, he showed us a Ford van which was in the process of getting flared. The front flares were Imaginary Glass bolt-on's that were molded. But the rear ones had to be fabricated out of metal.

This particular van was lowered just enough to where the stock flares would rub against the tires every so often. To remedy the situation, the stock flare wheel well lips were cut off, then the radius of each well was slightly enlarged (with a big hammer) to ensure against tire/body contact.

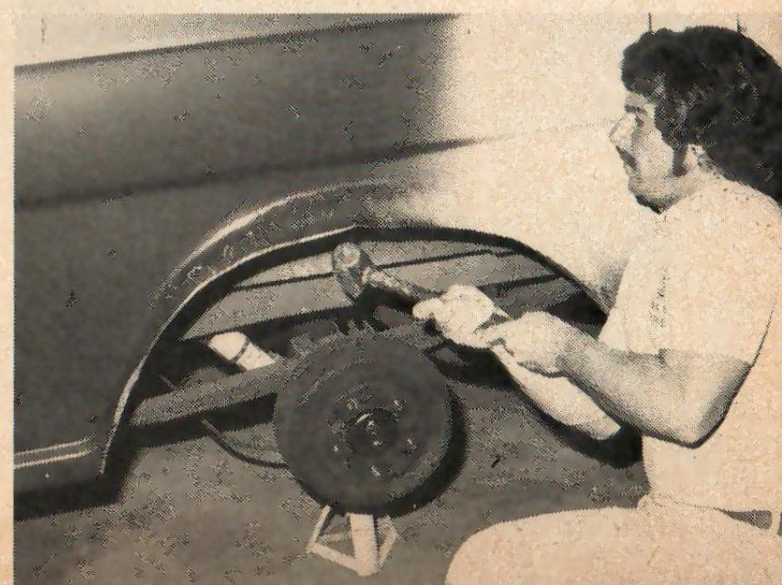
Now comes the time consuming part of fabricating each flare. Satisfied with the new radius, John obtained a piece of cardboard and affixed it to the opening. He then trimmed it to shape; this pattern would be used for the new sheet metal. The mounted tire was used as a guide for new flare width (in this case, the edge of the flare was lined up with the wall of the tire).

After cutting out new sheet metal, John bolted it to the van wheel well, and did some more trimming until the desired shape was attained. Then he welded this new piece to the body. The rear lip on the van's bottom panel was also utilized as part of the flare. John pulled it out so would angle toward the edge of the flare, then did some hammer and dolly work to smooth things out a little. The front of the flare was also formed with new metal. Instead of stop-



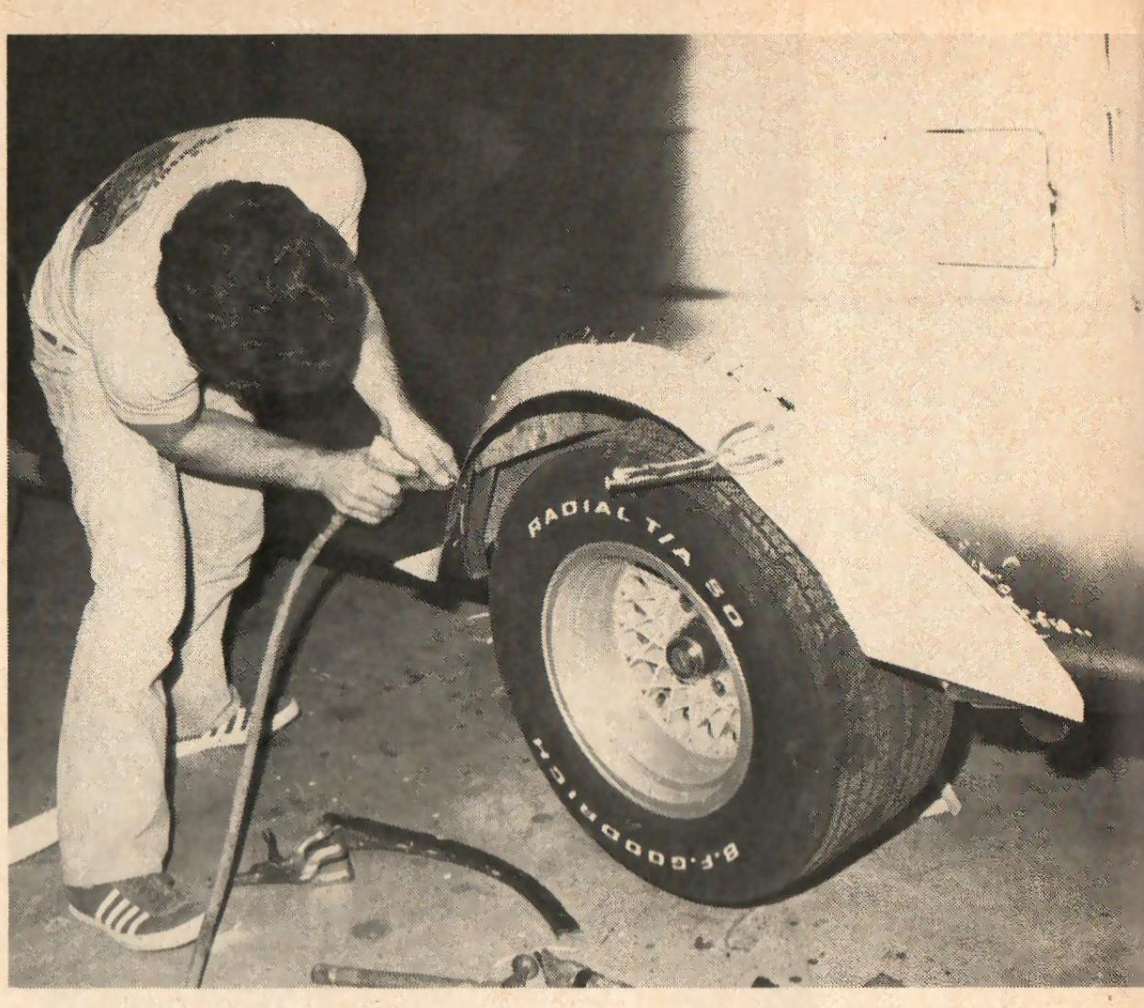


For these custom fabricated flares, the stock wheel well lips were cut off and saved, then John Bruno enlarged radius with big hammer.

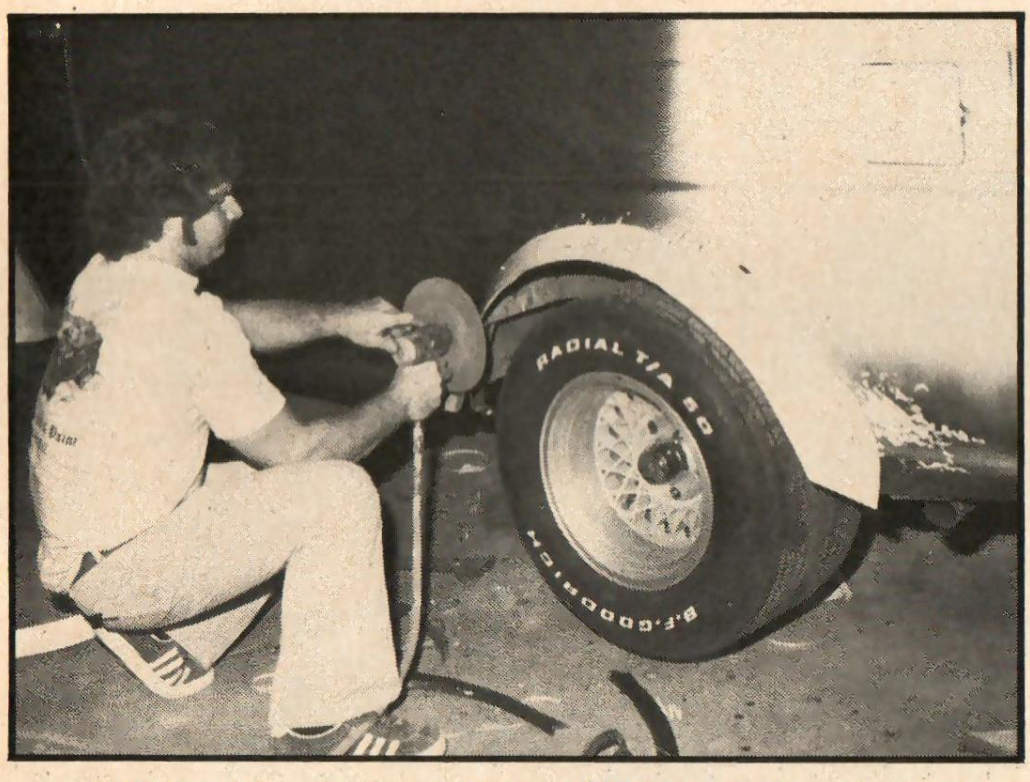


by Robert K. Smith

ABOVE—The stock bottom lip of the van body was pulled out and angled toward edge of flare. Hammer and dolly work is necessary to form smooth contours. When finished, this section looks super.

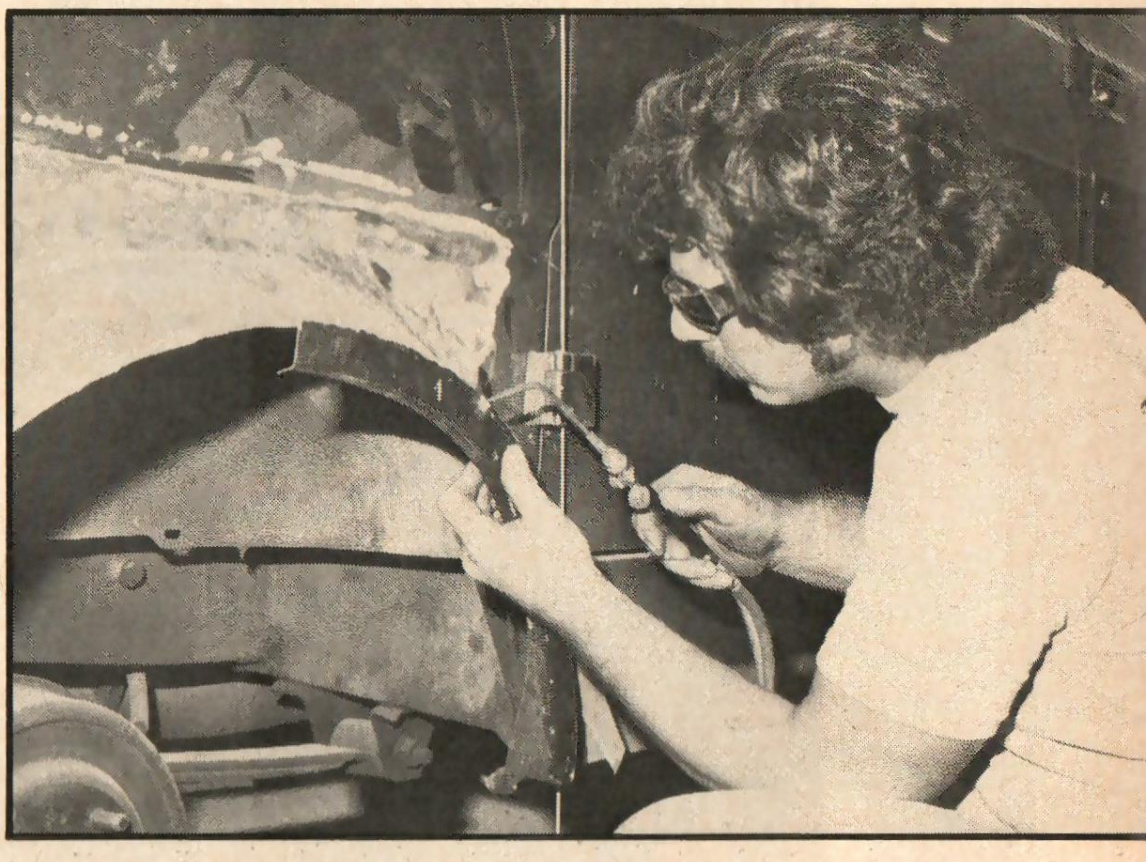


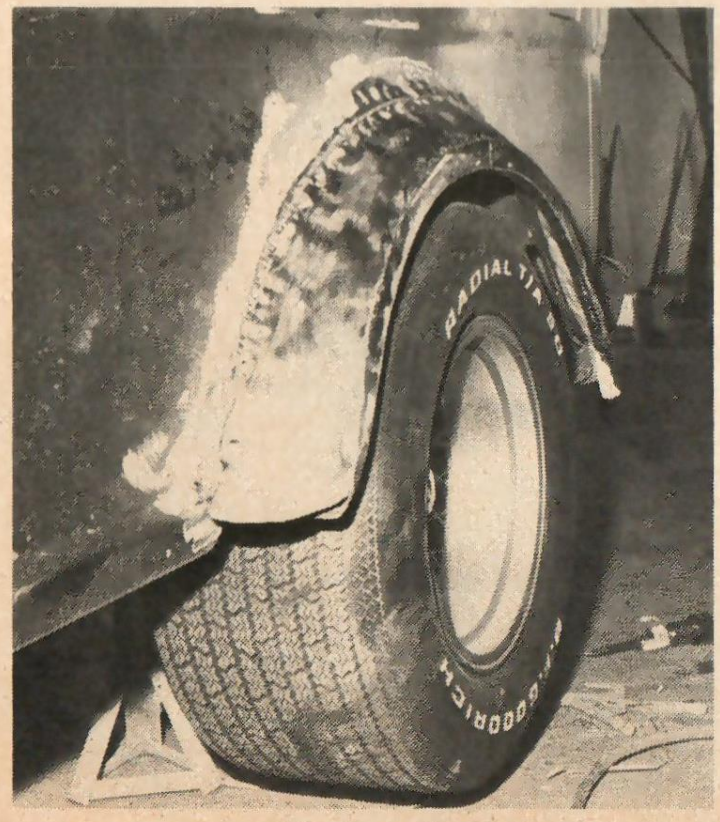
ABOVE—The Western 15x10 Wire Mag with BF Goodrich LR50x15 Radial T/A was mounted in place for initial alignment of new flare. After mock-up cardboard, John cut sheet metal, and screwed it to wheel well.



ABOVE—John cut out the pattern slightly larger so any extra trimming could be done. Here, the flare edge is ground straight.

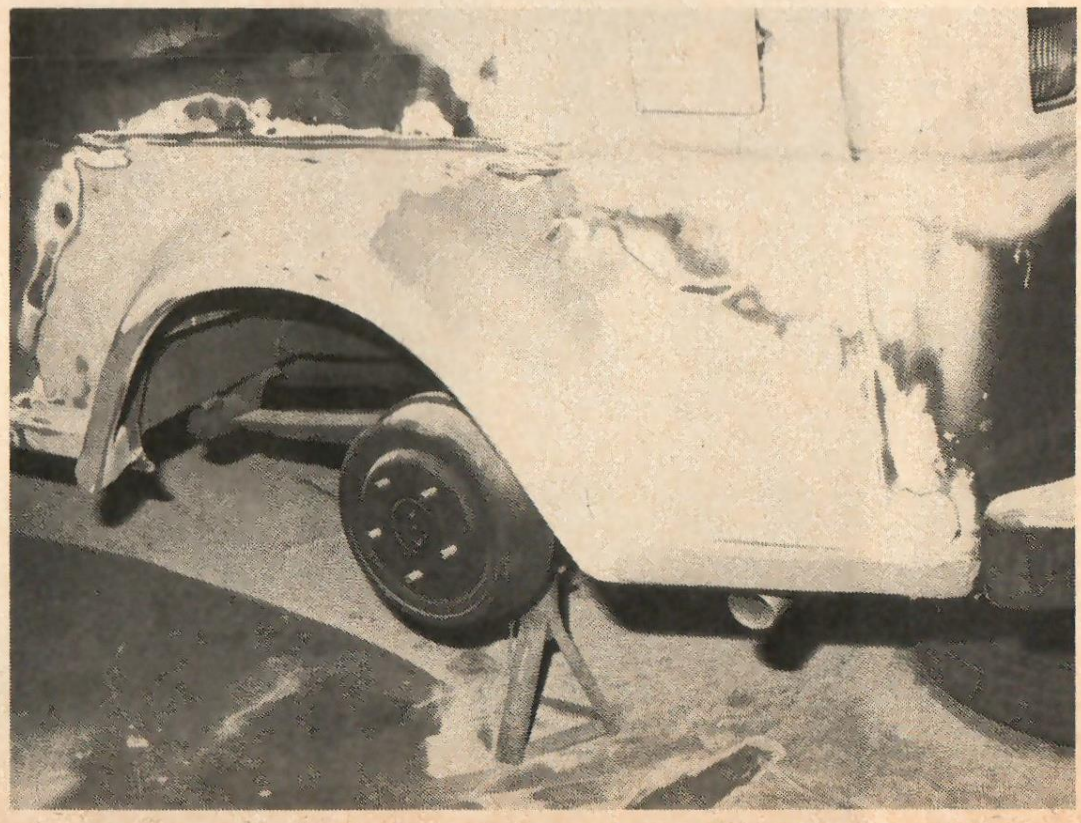
RIGHT—Stock well lip (which was saved) was cut and pieced to flare edge. New opening contours more to tire than stock setup.





LEFT—Here is the basic flare welded in place. Notice how the pieced flare lip really highlights the flare. Next, more sheet metal has to be pieced in at the front and rear of flare. Edge of flare lines up with tire's sidewall.

RIGHT—After all the metal was finish welded, the "mud" was mixed and applied to overall flare. Now the flare is lookin' good. Check out rear angled lip.

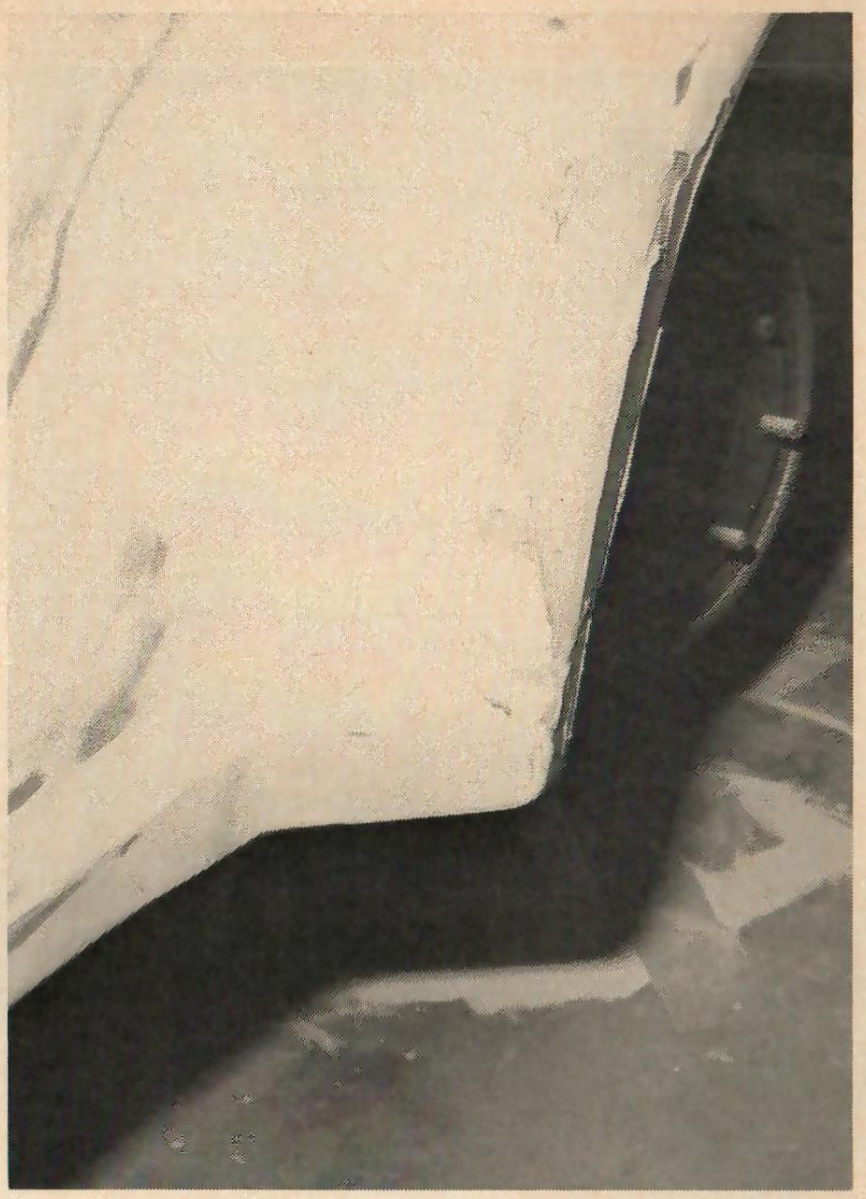


METAL FLARES

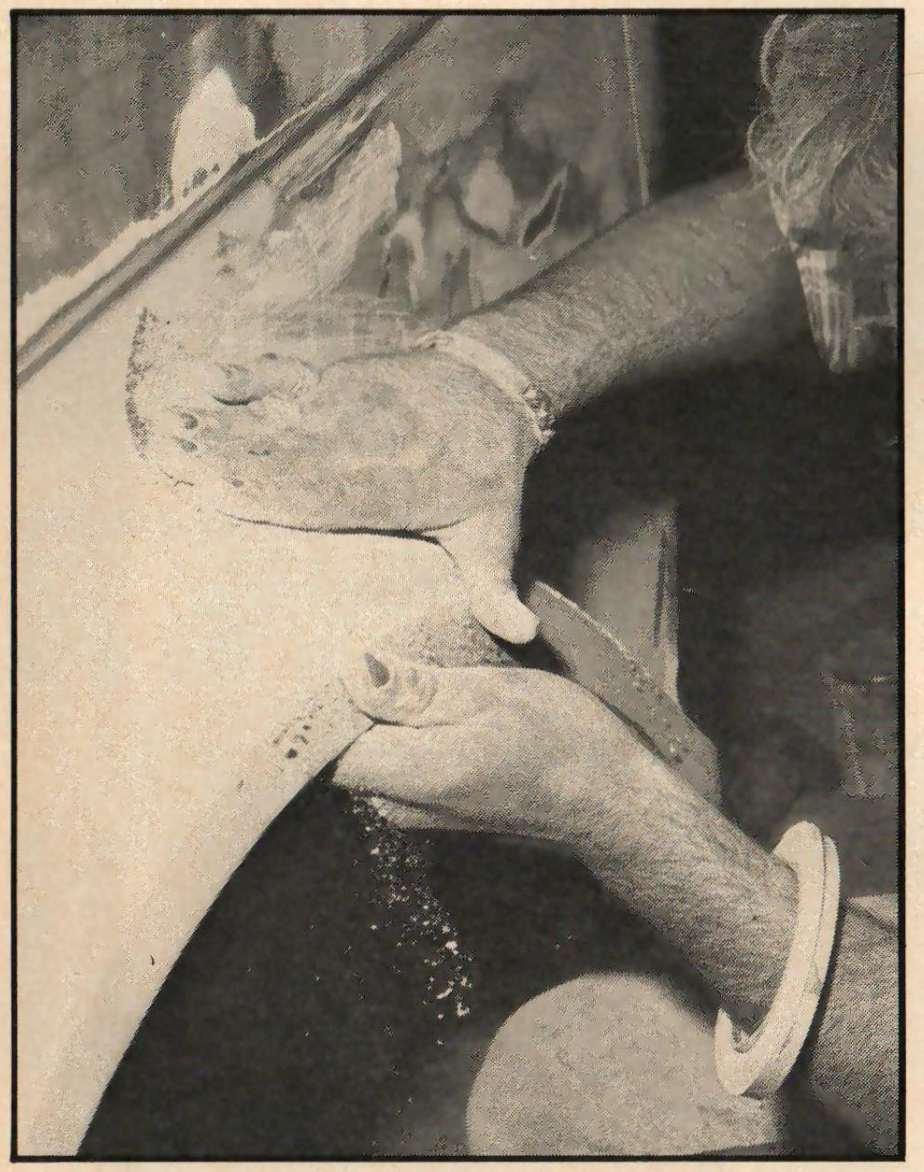
ping abruptly at the flare's front, a piece was made which angled forward slightly, and this piece was welded in. To finish the metal work, the stock flare lips were cut and pieced together to form the edges.

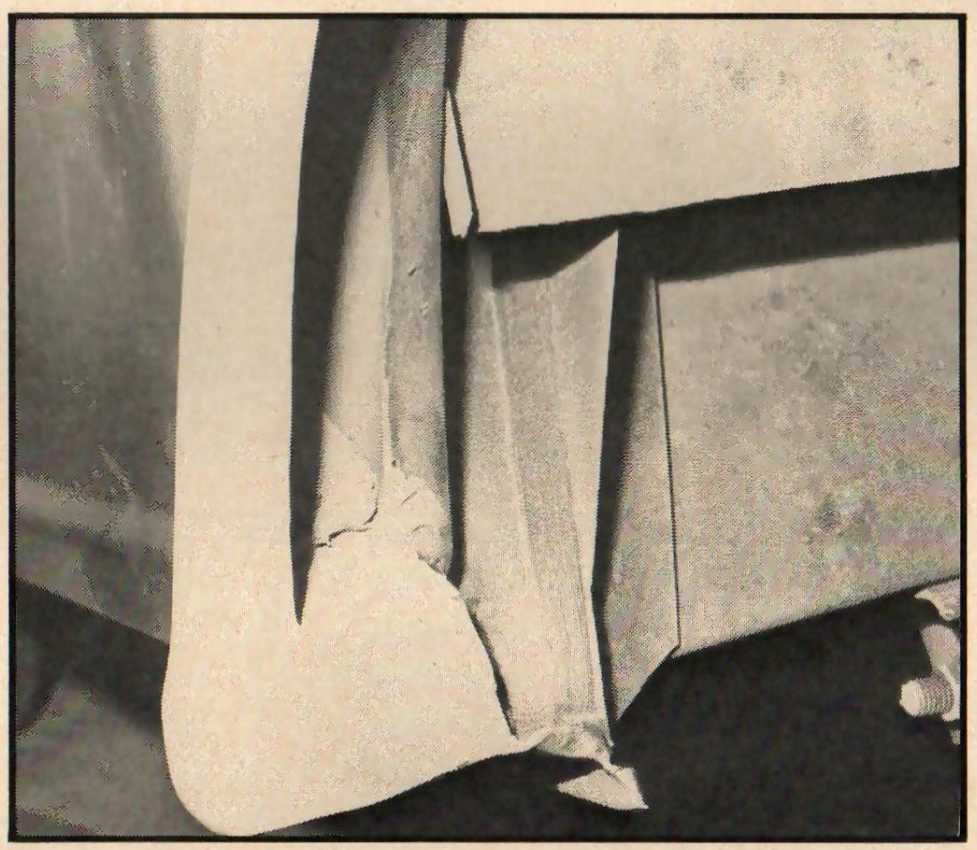
With all the metal work completed, John and Steve Beam applied plastic filler, commonly called bondo or "mud," over the entire reworked area. With the basic contours set up, Steve cheese grated the mud, then sanded everything down smooth. The procedure was done twice. The last step was spraying on the primer.

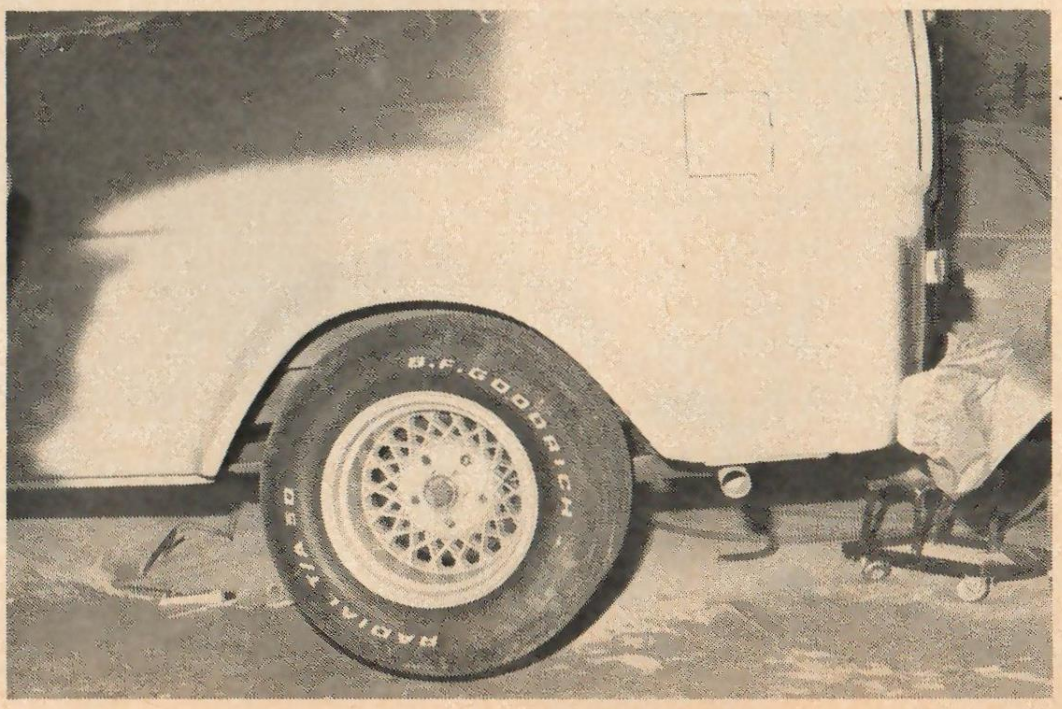
As you can see, these custom fabricated flares look super, and they work. This type of modification does take a lot of time though, so before you think about lowering your van or want to make metal flares, think about what you're going to be in for. One thing for sure, if you go the custom route, you'll have a one-of-a-kind set of flares.



RIGHT—Instead of ending the flare abruptly in the front, the crew at Odessey angled it forward, and contoured it to bottom body lip.





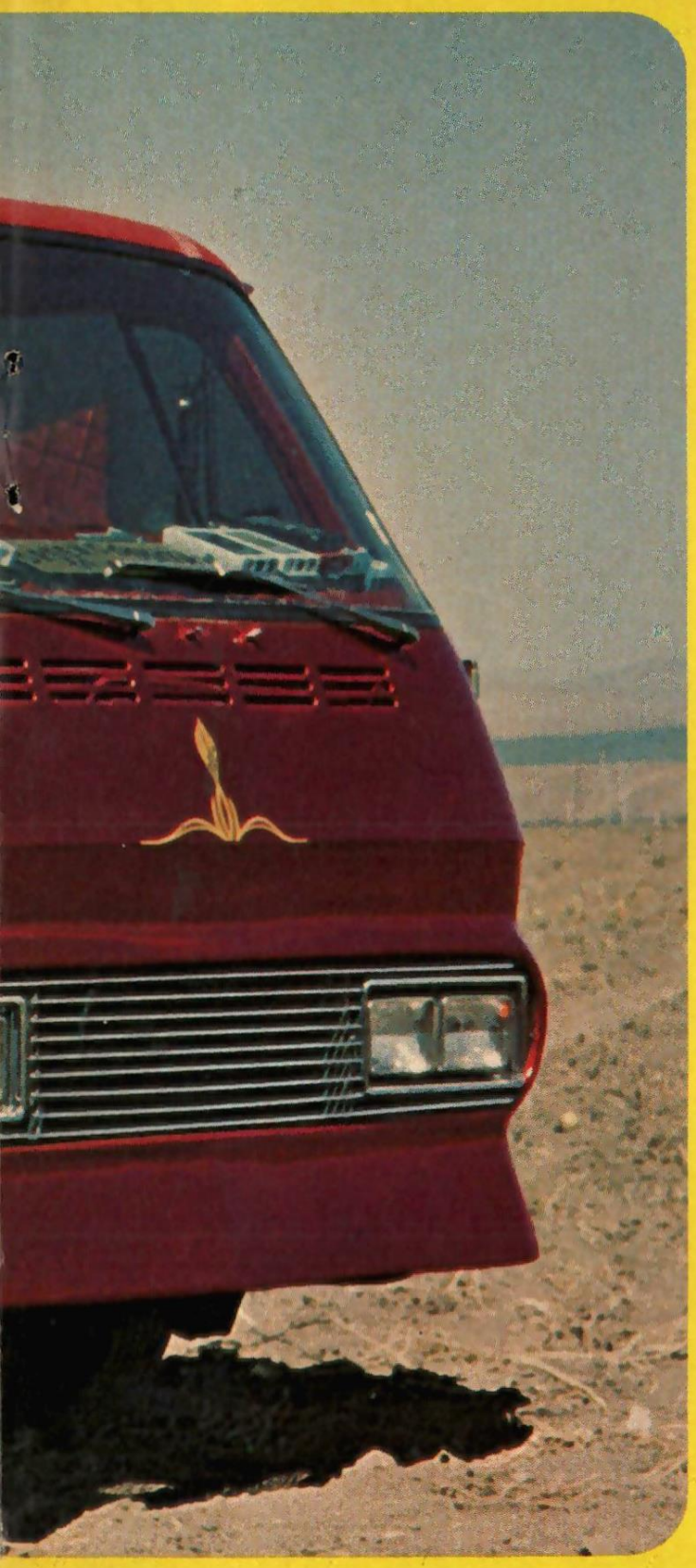


ABOVE—Nearing completion, Steve sanded down the flare, working from a course grit to a finer grit paper. Next step is primer.

ABOVE RIGHT—At the inside front of flare, Steve added metal. If he didn't, water would get trapped in a pocket and rust would set in—a no-no.

RIGHT—Here is the finished flare. It really accents the van's overall appearance. It's a lot of work but the end result is worth it.

Truckin'



Candy Apple

The paint on Ed Lozano's early Chevy is outstanding.

Eddie Lozano
Tulsa, Oklahoma

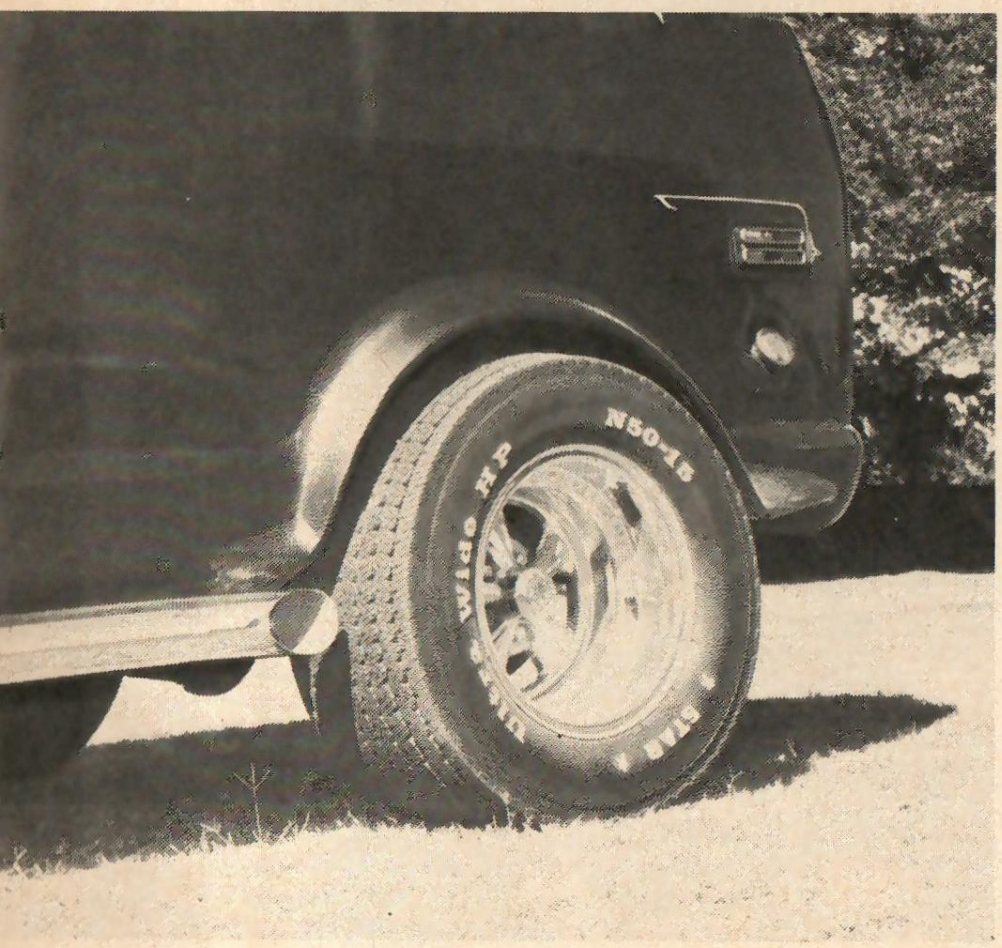
photography: Steve Coonan

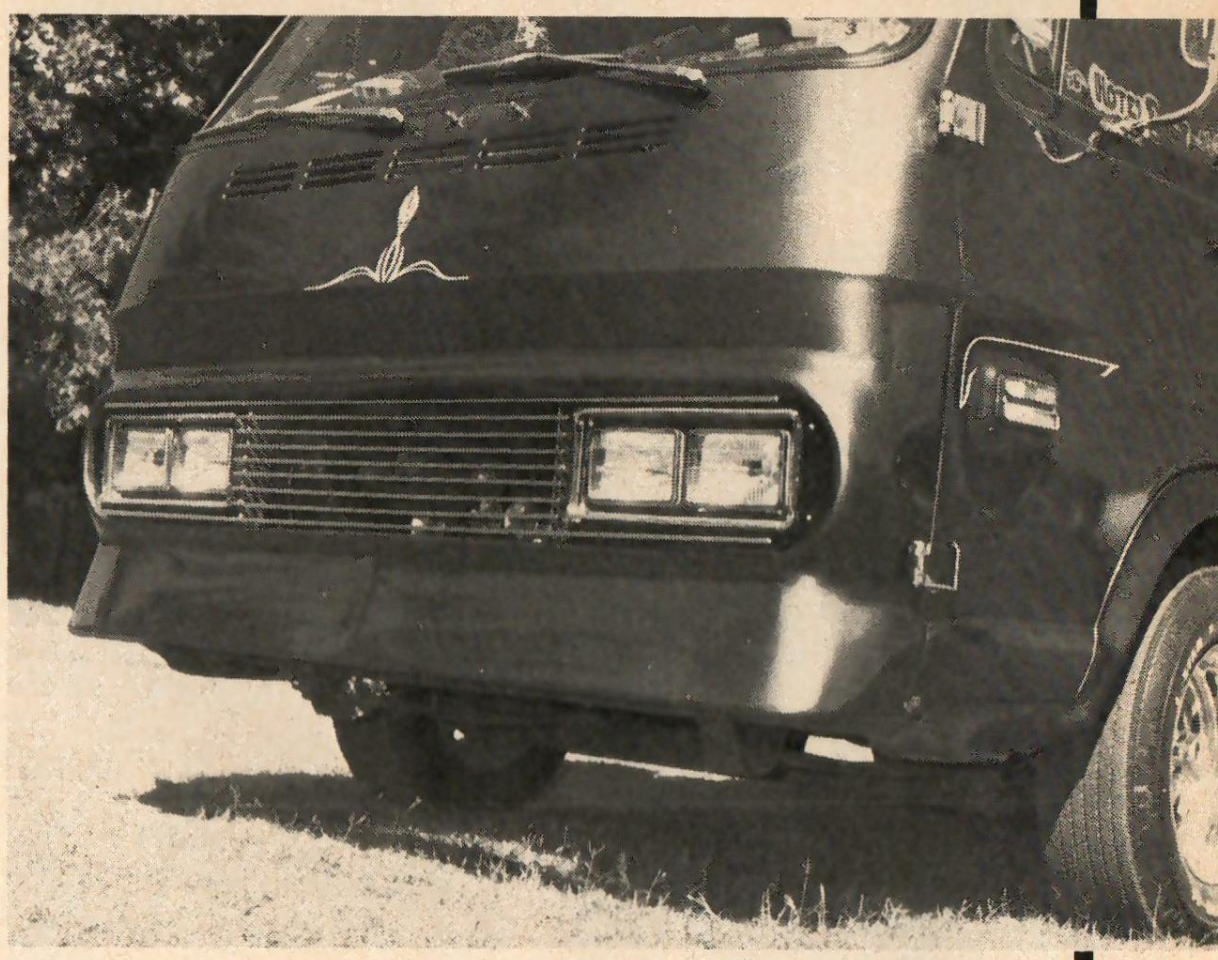
ABOVE—Eddie has put over 65,000 miles on his '68 Chevy van going to van happenings this past summer. Ed has spent more than his share of time polishing the candy red over a silver base paint, which was sprayed by Tulsa's Magic Man.

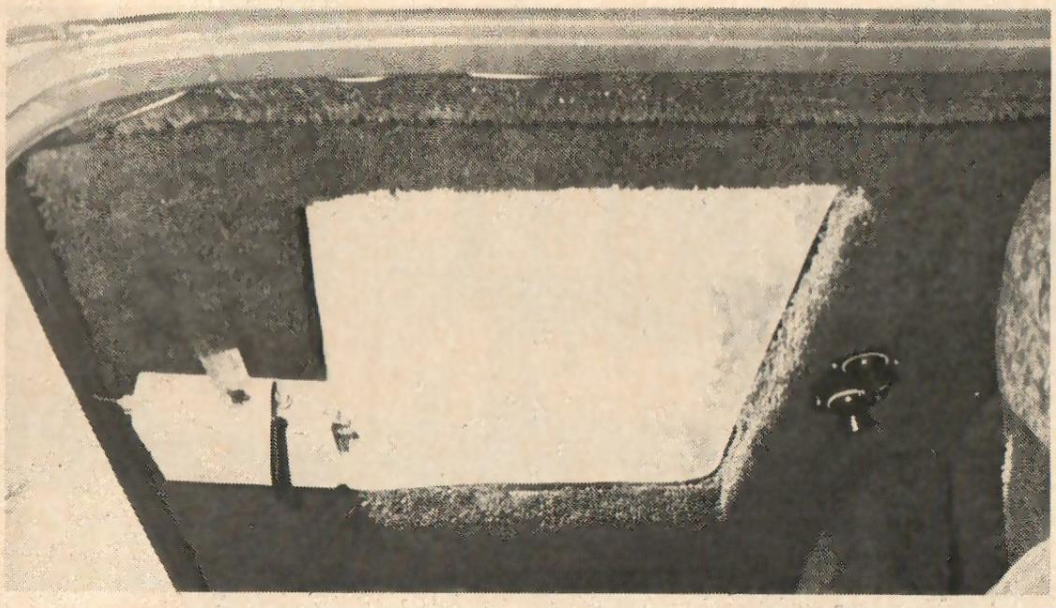
RIGHT—The interior was done in diamond pleated velvet by Eddie. The engine cover features a center console with gauges and a stereo.

by Steve Coonan

Candy Apple







ABOVE LEFT—Steel flares were fabricated by Carefree Highway Truckin' to cover the N50-15 tires mounted on 12-inch Cragar S/S's. Other trucks include the chrome dump tube style side-pipes and the late model side marker lights.

ABOVE—Changes to the front end are extensive, and it was all done in metal. The front bumper was axed in favor of an air dam type spoiler. Rectangular headlights came from a '75 Pontiac. A tube grille was built to fill the cavity. Yellow striping was used to highlight the body mods.

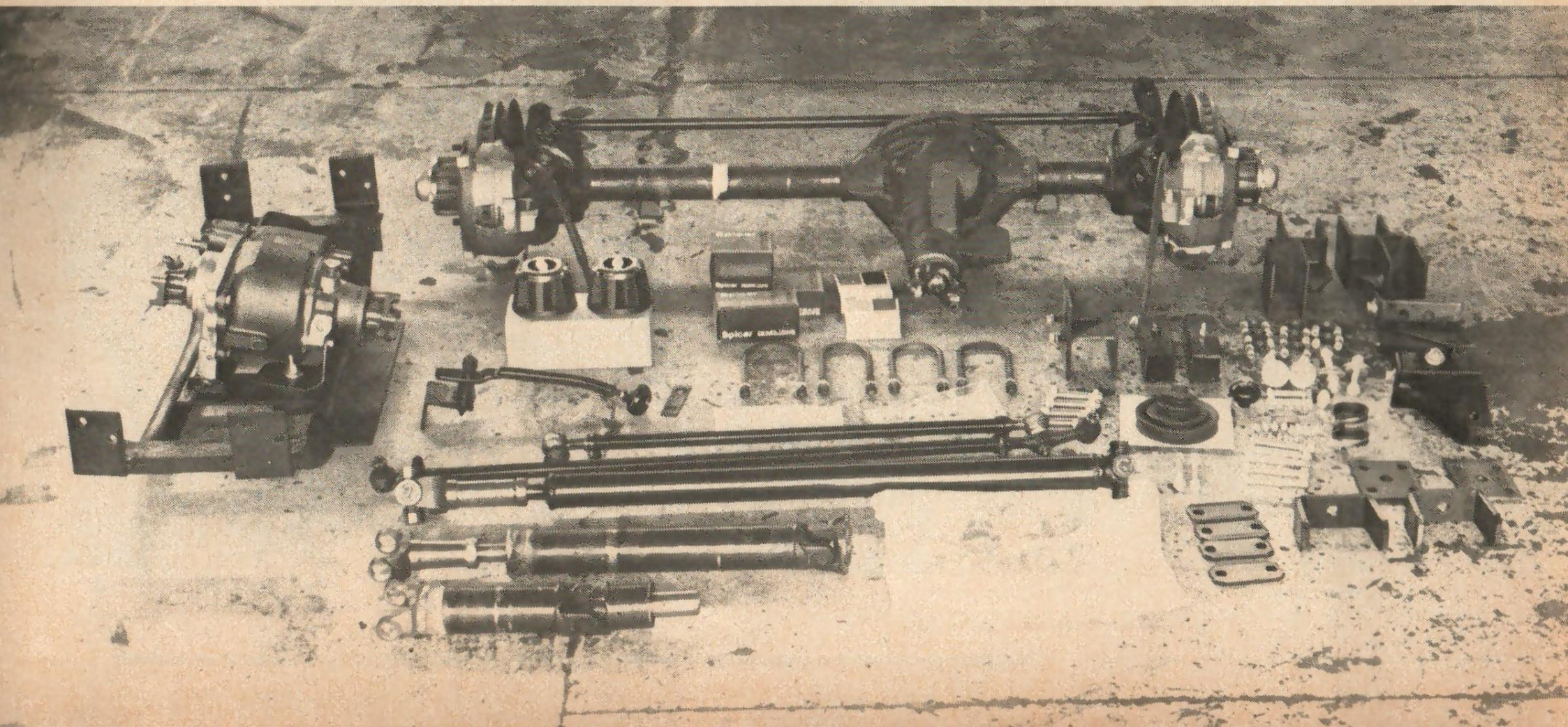
LEFT—Ed is a glass worker by trade, so naturally his van sports some wild windows. Over the cab portion of the interior is a fixed sunroof that lets light in but no wind or water. The side windows are true one way glass, not mirror tint.

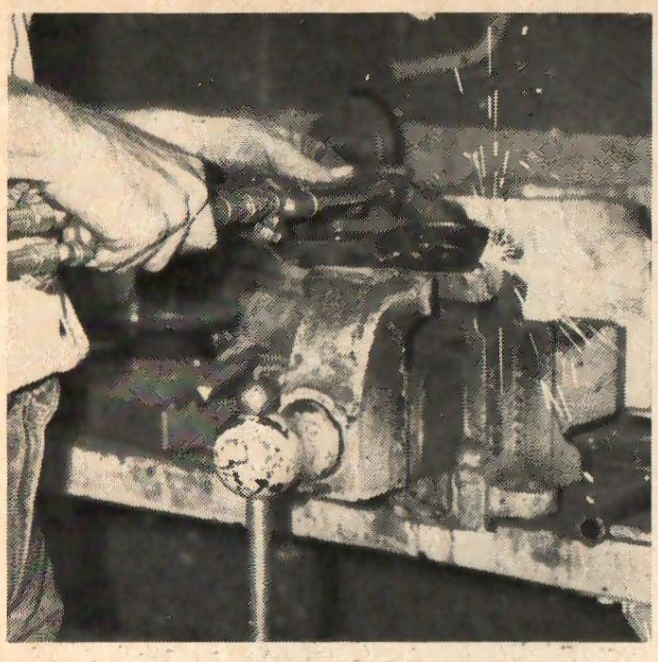
BELOW—Rear view shows off the rolled pan, vertically mounted Pontiac taillights, and a cartoon mural of Tulsa's number one cruising spot, Peoria St. Point getting details like the chrome hinges help Ed win trophies at most happenings.

ABOVE — More of Ed's handiwork shows up in the rear of the interior. The mirrored wall and ceiling are surrounded by shag carpet. Muraling the mirrored wall is something a little different in van interiors.

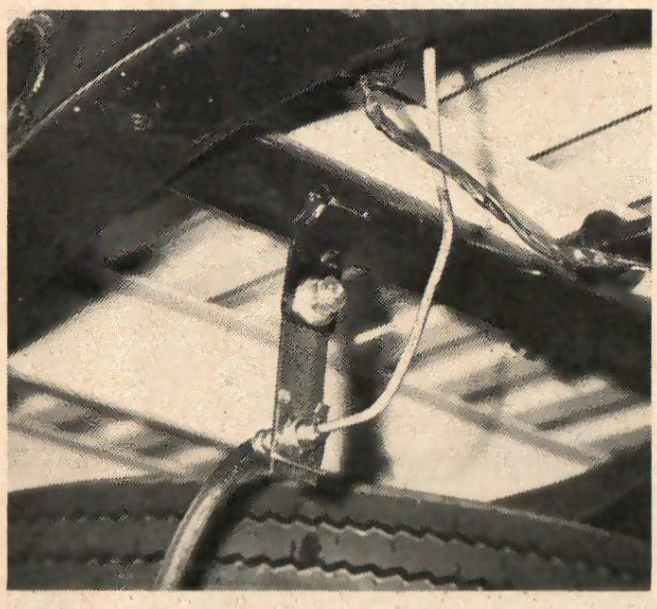
4x4 Minis' Low Mig's bolt-on kits

by Steve Coonan



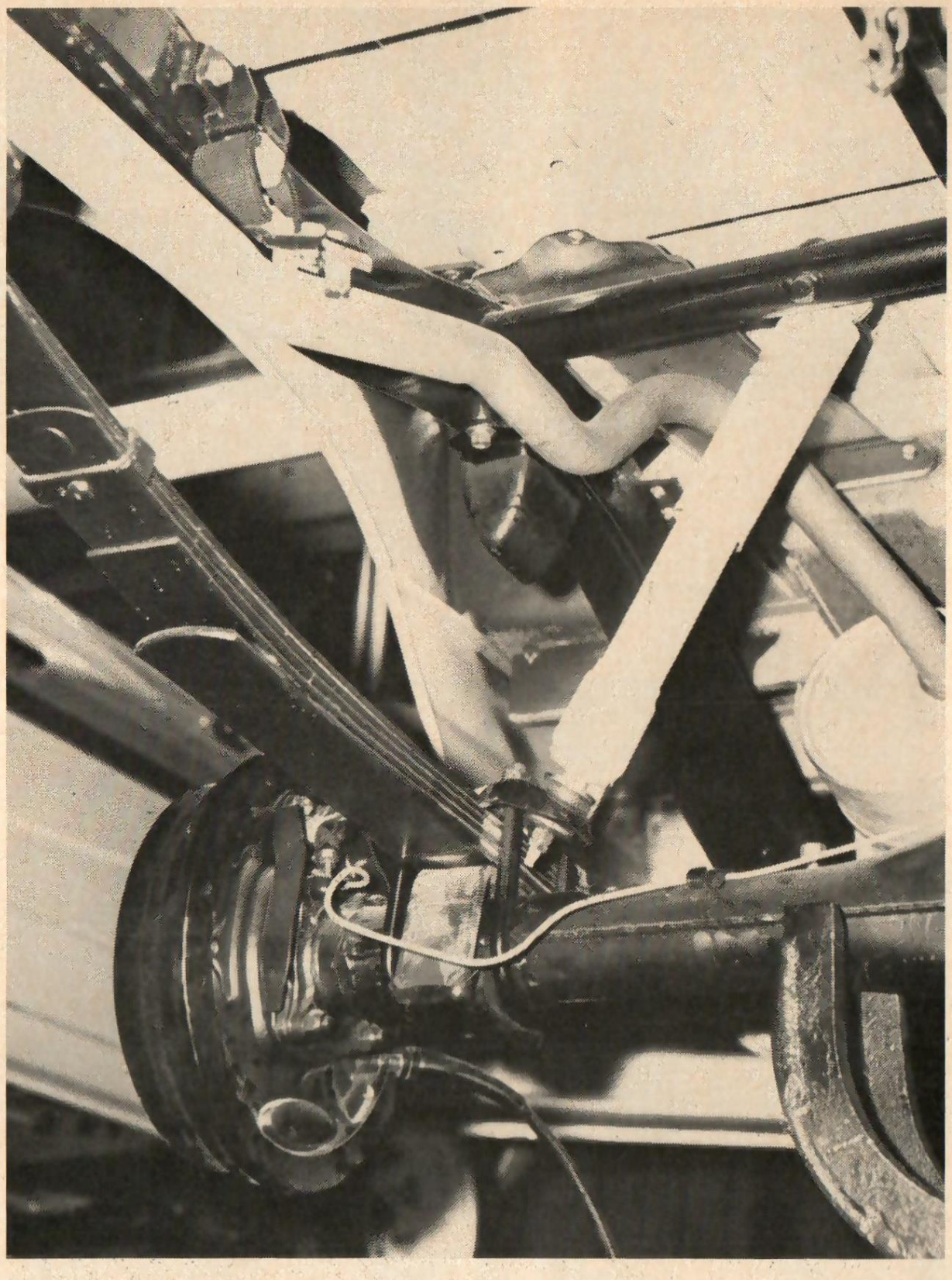


ABOVE—First step after removing rear is to cut spring bolt and shock mount lip to fit over spring.



ABOVE—The brake line extender allows the use of the stock flexible brake hose.

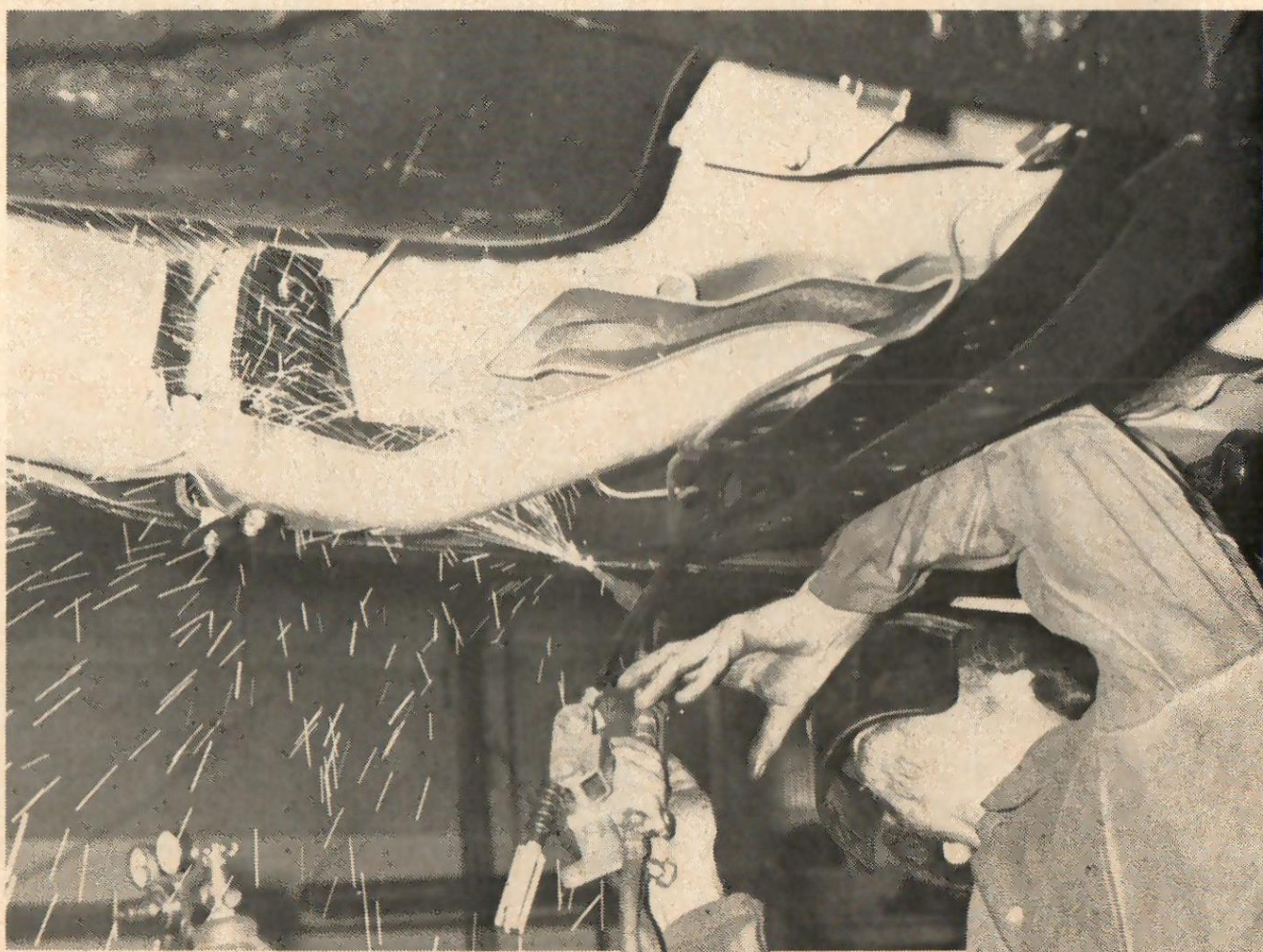
RIGHT—The rearend is mounted below the springs with the Low C shaped mounting pads.



Undoubtedly, four wheel drive mini trucks are neat. But purchasing one from a new car dealer can be expensive. Even having a converter add the four wheeler pieces can be costly, inconvenient, or perhaps you live in an area where there aren't any shops that do this type of work. The alternative is to do it yourself.

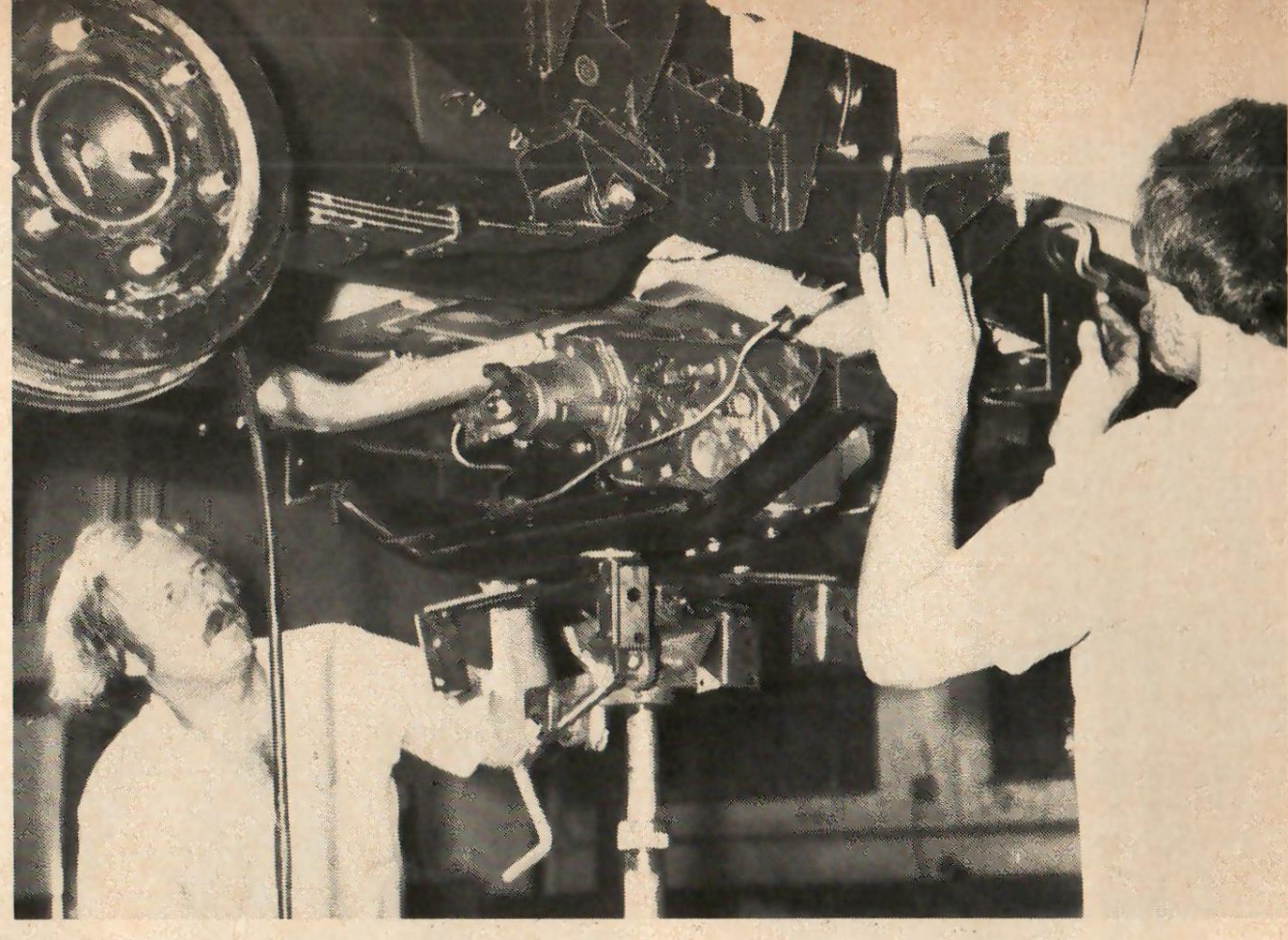
Building up a 4x4 mini truck from scratch would be an overly ambitious task for anyone with less than a complete machine shop in his home garage. The solution to the problem comes in kit form from Low Manufacturing in Monrovia, California. Low offers kits to convert Datsun and Ford Courier mini trucks over to four wheel drive. By early spring they plan to have expanded the line to cover the rest of the popular little trucks.

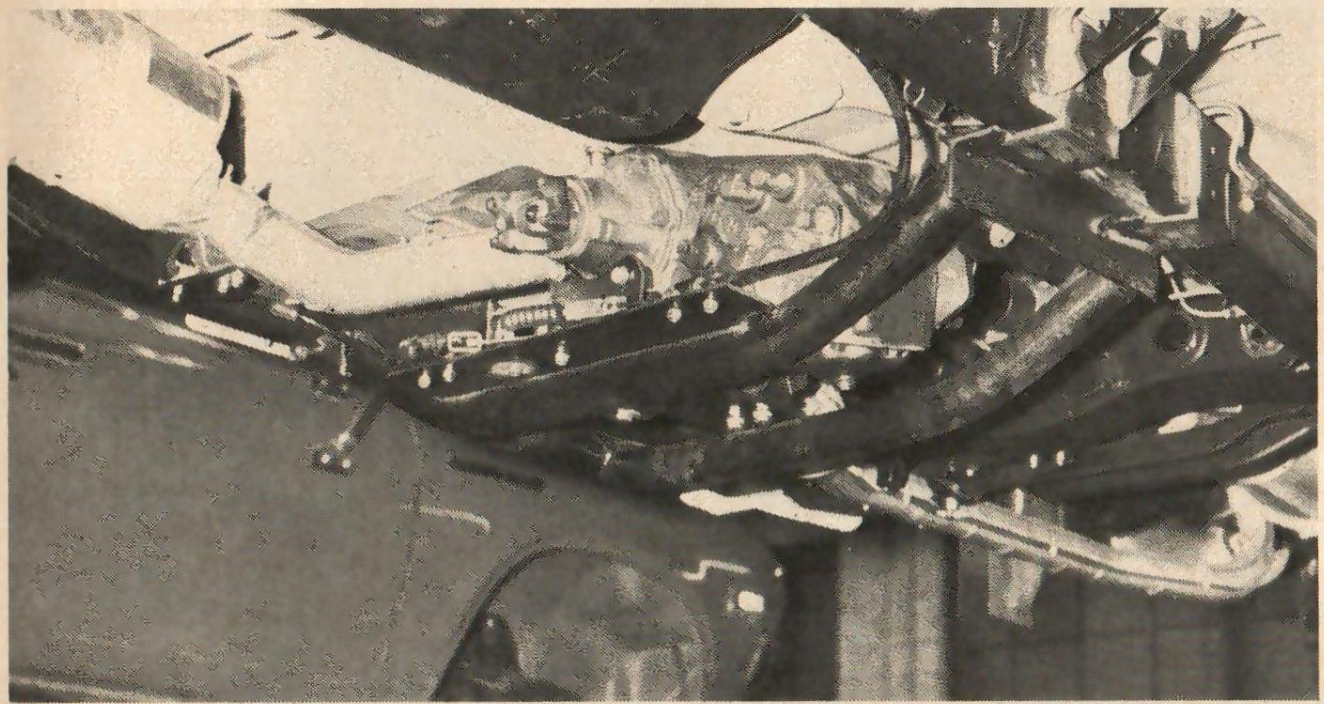
The kits are designed so that virtually anyone can do his own conversion without the help of a welding of machine shop. The kits are a complete bolt-on. The toughest part of the job for someone without access to a cutting torch,



ABOVE—After the emergency brake linkage is unbolted, the stock tranny crossmember can be torched away. Do not cut away the master cylinder mounting.

ABOVE—After the crossmember has been removed, clean the area with a grinder for a neater appearance.

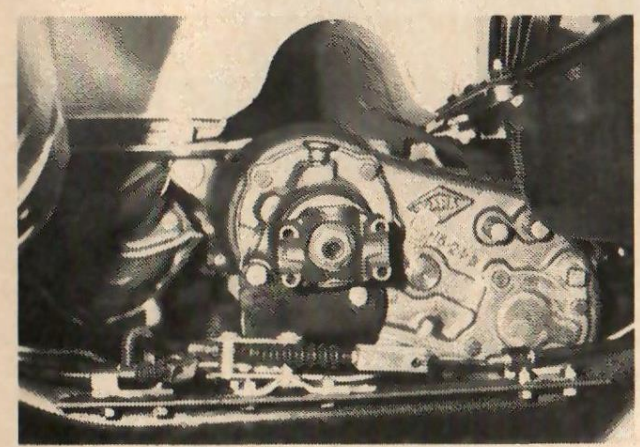




ABOVE—Bolt the transfer case to the new center crossmember and raise it into position. A transmission jack works good here.

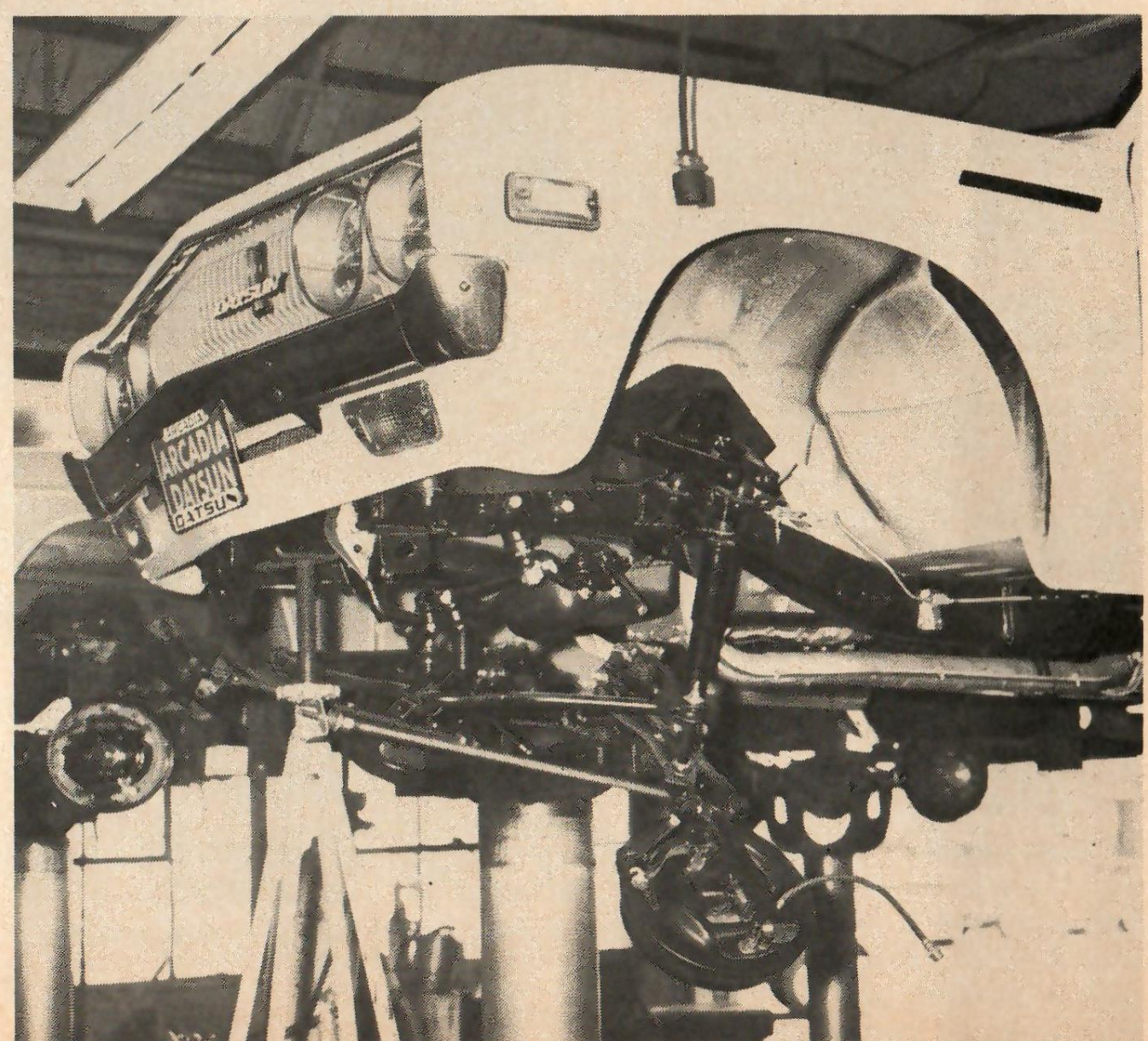
LEFT—The crossmember tabs can then be bolted or welded to the Datsun frame rails. Welding is suggested for heavy-duty use.

4x4 Minis'



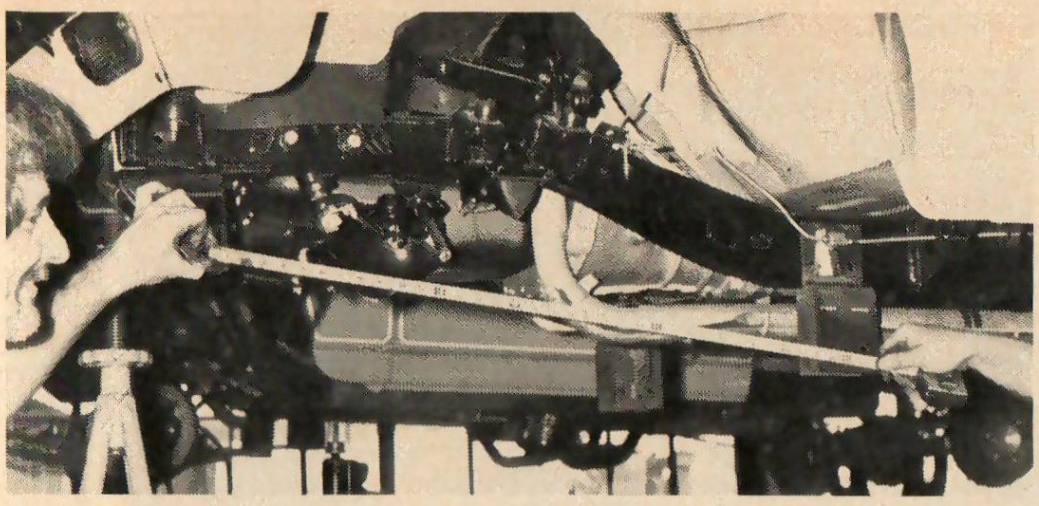
ABOVE—The Low crossmember has provisions to bolt up the stock E-brake hardware.

RIGHT—First step on the front end is to cut away the stock suspension pieces. Upper A-arm shock towers are left in place.



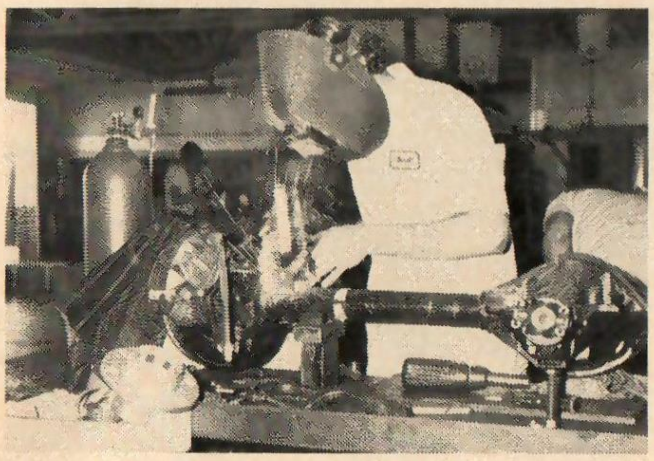
will be removing the front suspension and transmission crossmembers. Once the truck is disassembled, the new components simply bolt into place. Low Manufacturing suggests that for severe off-road or racing use, the transfer case crossmember, and the front suspension hangers should be welded on. But it is by no means a necessity for a dual purpose vehicle.

There is more to the Low Mfg kit than just the basic components. Everything



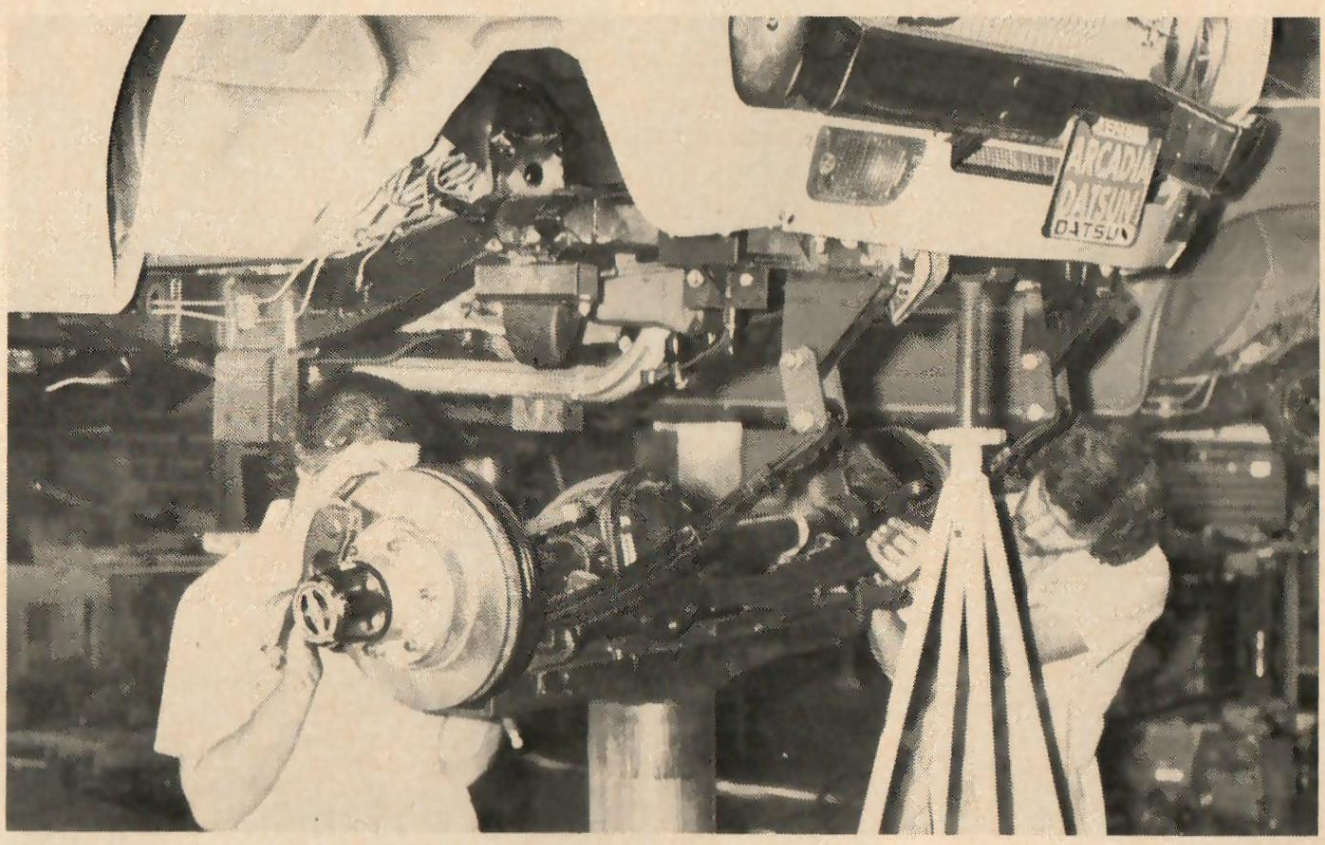
ABOVE—The front spring perches are located off of existing holes in the Datsun frame. Rear perch is positioned by measuring.

ABOVE—Seven leaf springs are used in the front to support the Dana housing. Low shackles go on the forward perch.



ABOVE—The Dana housing comes with spring mounts welded on. All welding done by Low is MIG wire feed.

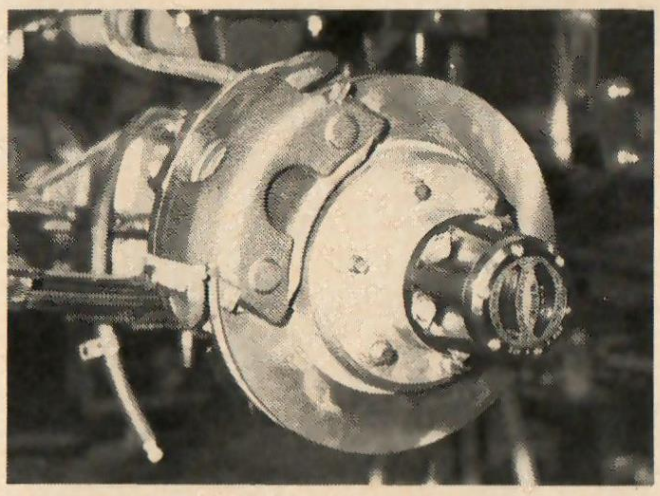
RIGHT—Having a hydraulic lift makes getting the frontend into place a lot easier, but the whole operation can be done at home.



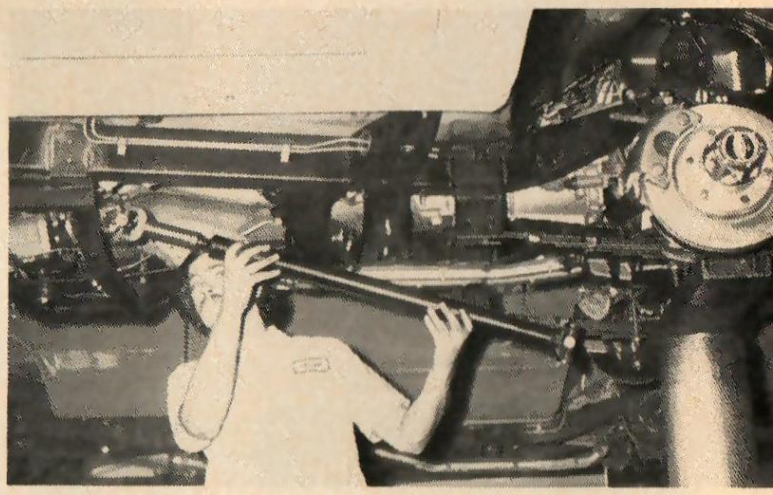
down to the last nut and bolt needed to get your 4X4 on the road is supplied. A step-by-step instruction booklet is also included, to help keep you on the right path. The basis for the kit is the Dana 30 front axle, and the Dana 20 transfer case. Other features include the optional front disc brakes, and Warn free-wheeling hubs.

On the day we visited the Low Mfg facility, they were installing one of the kits in a new Datsun pickup. The majority of the installations done in Low's shop have the transfer case crossmember and the front suspension hangers welded as an additional precaution. The guys at Low allow a little over a day for a complete installation. So its not a Sunday afternoon type job. The home enthusiast could probably handle the conversion in a weekend.

We got a chance to drive the Low Mfg shop truck. It was a late Datsun with custom paint, bucket seat interior, stereo, huge wheels and tires, and of course, a 4X4 kit. It proved to be an excellent combination of looks, and off-road capability, while retaining the economy characteristics normally found in a mini-truck. The Datsun was a lot of fun, yet it was still practical transportation. If Low Mfg gets their way, 4X4 mini-trucks will be the off-road vehicles of the 1980's.



ABOVE—The big disc brakes and the Warn free wheeling hubs make the package all that more attractive.



ABOVE—The last step before going for a ride in your new 4x4 is to bolt up the driveshaft and bleed the brakes.

ABOVE—If their shop truck is any indication, 4x4 minis' are all kinds of fun to drive.

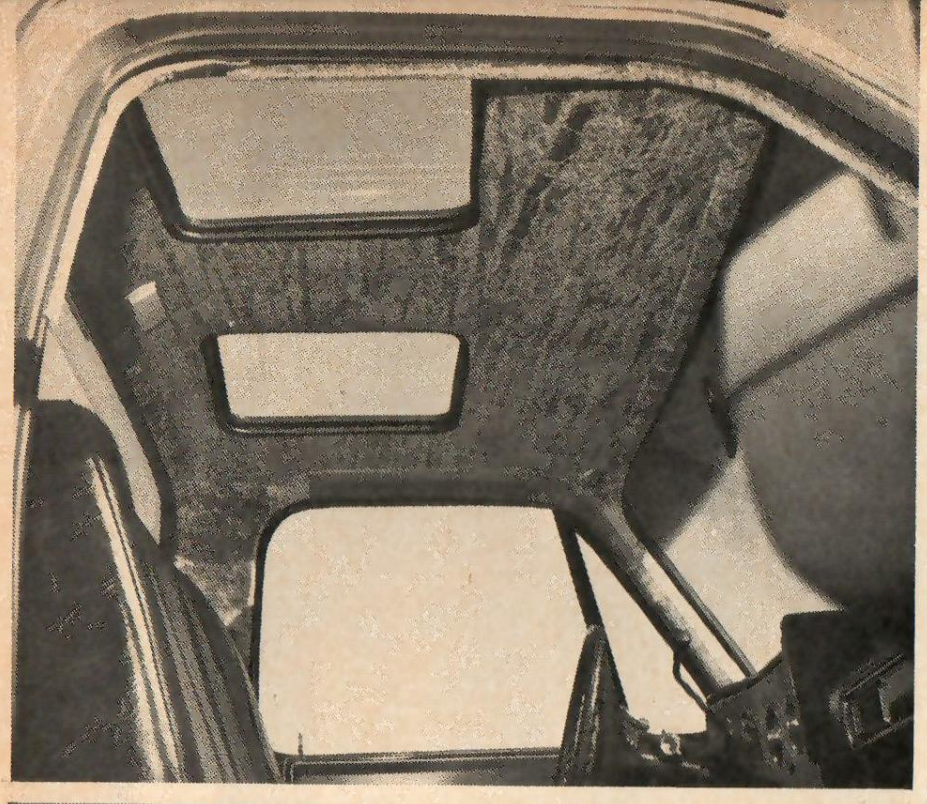
This super trick '74 Chevy is . . .

JR'S TRUCK

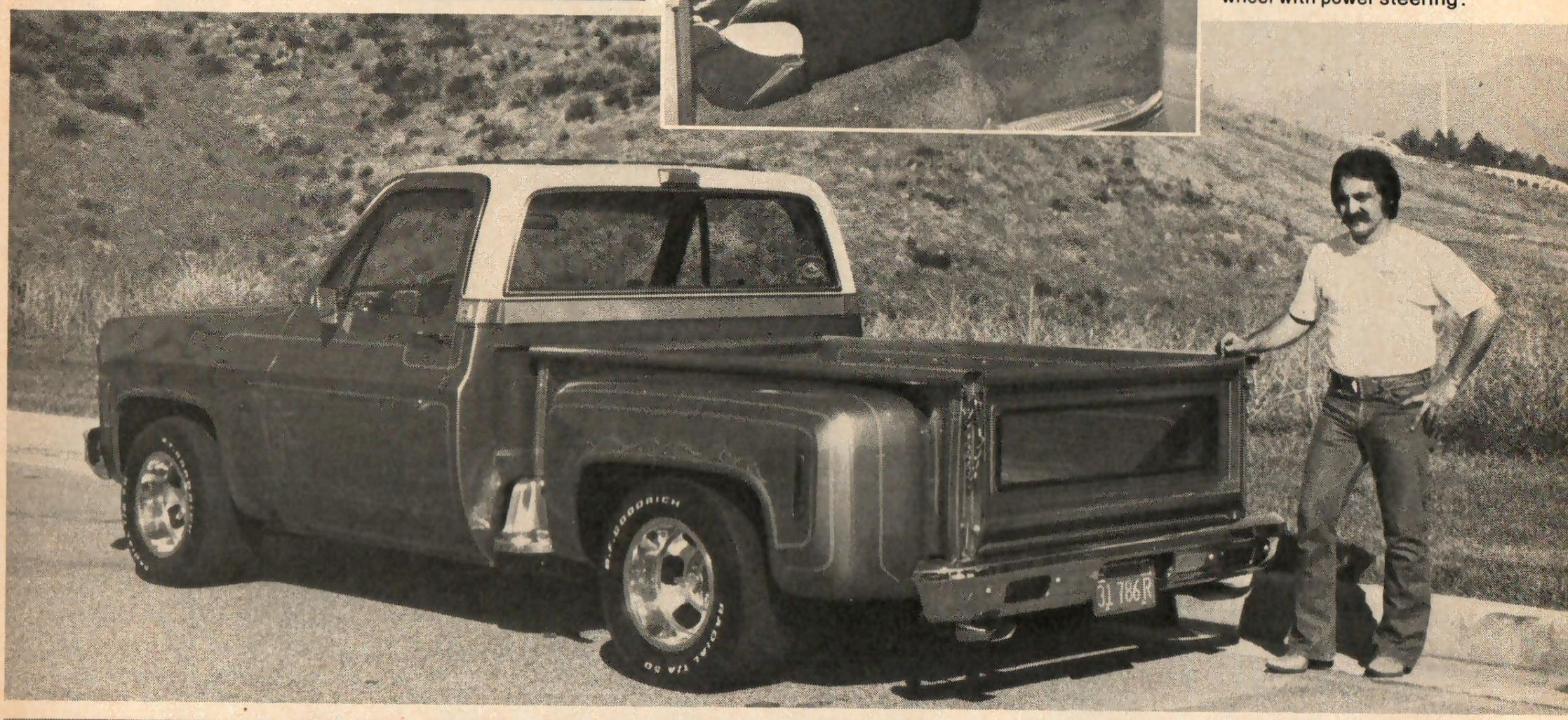
Truckin'

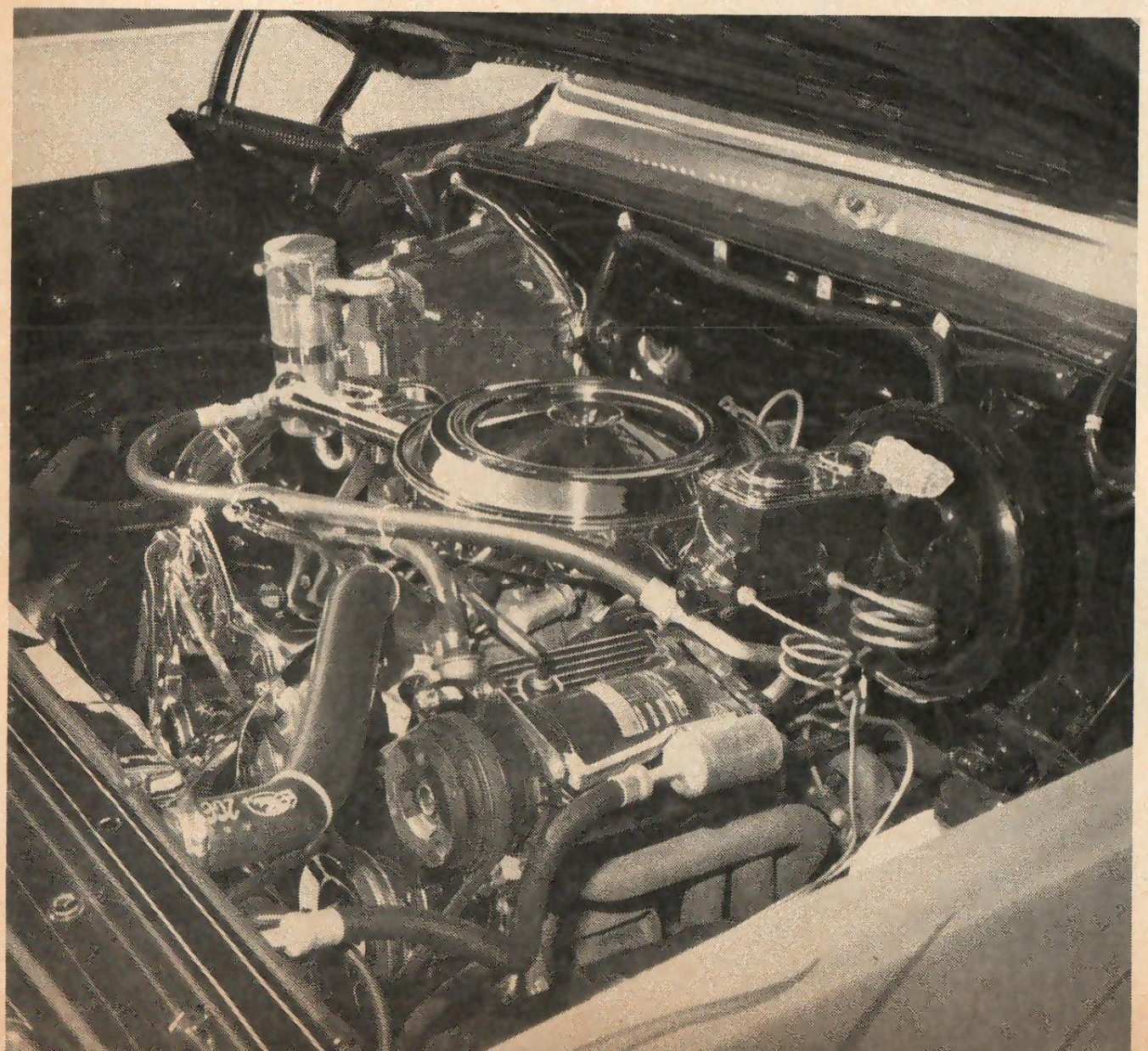
Mike Garabedian, Jr.
Fresno, California

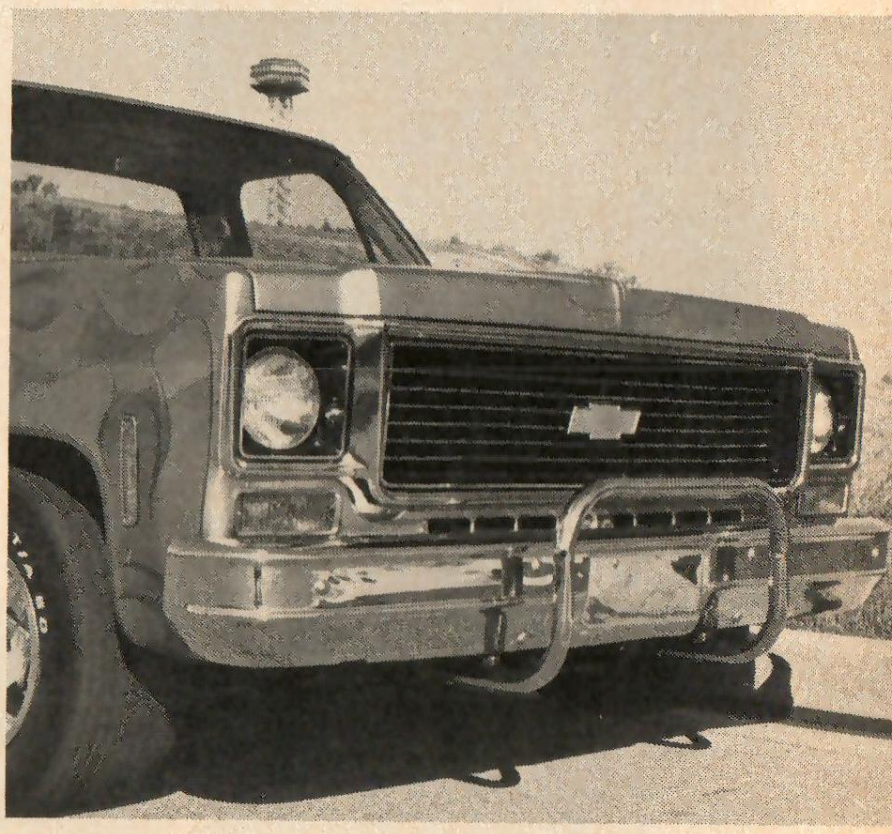
photography Robert K. Smith



Owner of Mike's International, a body and paint shop in Fresno, Mike Jr. wanted his everyday truck to be in super shape inside and out, and also underneath. It took 11 months from start to finish but JR says it was worth it. The entire undercarriage was stripped, painted black acrylic enamel, and striped by Dale lysdahl. Interiorwise, it's nicely done (Danny Gray's Upholstery Specialties) in gold crushed velvet, shag carpet, and naugahyde. Other tricks include dual sunroofs, tilt wheel with power steering.







The flawless body is covered in Persian lime green metallic with green candy and gold dust flames. Neil Averill handled striping. Check out glass tailgate; stock lettering was relocated in front bed panel. Engine is super sano, with chromed and brass 350, Cragar headers, rubbed black enamel compartment. More goodies are brass push bar, '73 Courier taillights in bumper, US Indy mags with BFG Radial T/' 50's, auxiliary tank.

KING CITY II

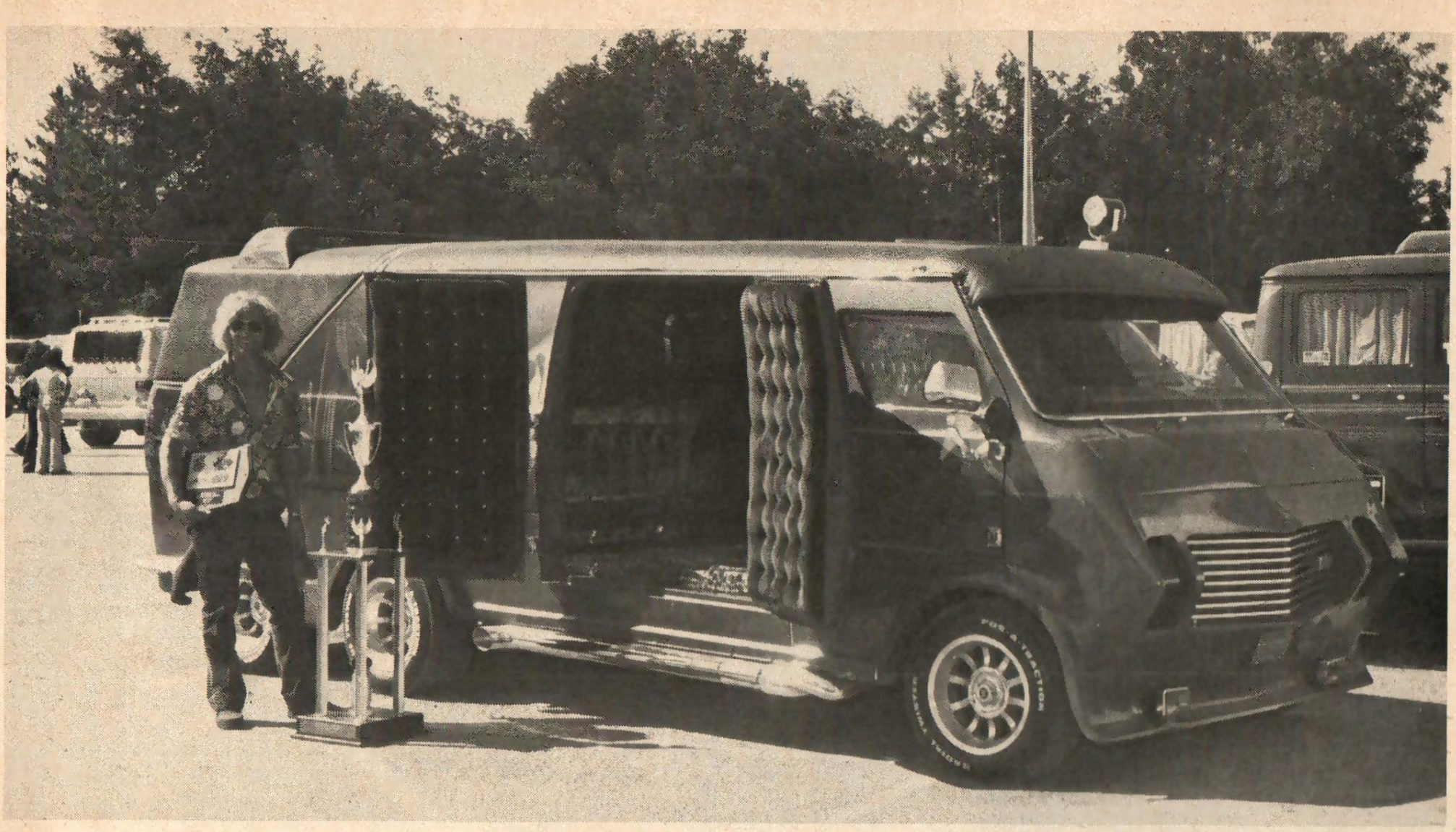
1,512 vans showed up and $6,500 was raised for charity.

by Robert K. Smith

If you've been into vanning for awhile, for sure you have heard of King City. It's a small town in Northern California, just south of Salinas, where once a year, Nor Cal Vans hosts their "biggie" van happening. For 1977, the West Coast Van Nationals (King City 5) went on during October 7th, 8th, and 9th. And this one drew 1,512 vans, with a total of 145 clubs. All this for a worthy cause — charity. $6,500 was raised by the vanners, and the monies were distributed to various charities in Northern California, with $1,500 going to King City charity.

The big day of the event was Saturday. At nine, there was an obstacle race, followed by the huge van show starting at ten. In the rodeo arena, there was much going on. The van push was first, then came the van cross. This event must have drawn the majority of vanners. This year, the crowd waited anxiously for one van to run, the Iron Butterfly with the supercharged 350. After the first run, the crowd wanted to see more rooster tails so owner Don Hastings made two more runs, with the second one a total score of 38, only .5 from tieing the winner of the event, Ed Jackson with his 4X4 Chevy.

Other activities for the happening included tug-of-war, volleyball, and

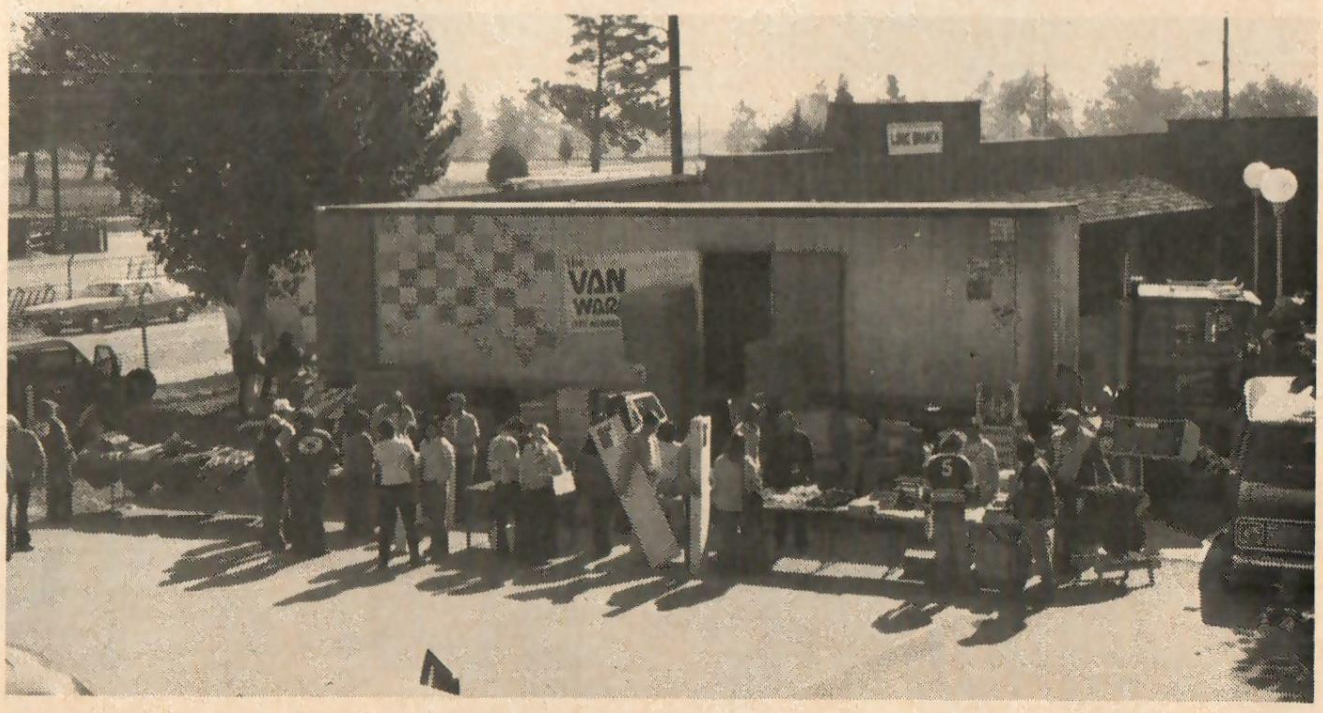


ABOVE—Best of Show and Best Interior (individual) went to Ken Jones' Harem. This 6-wheeler Ford sports plush interior, many body mods.

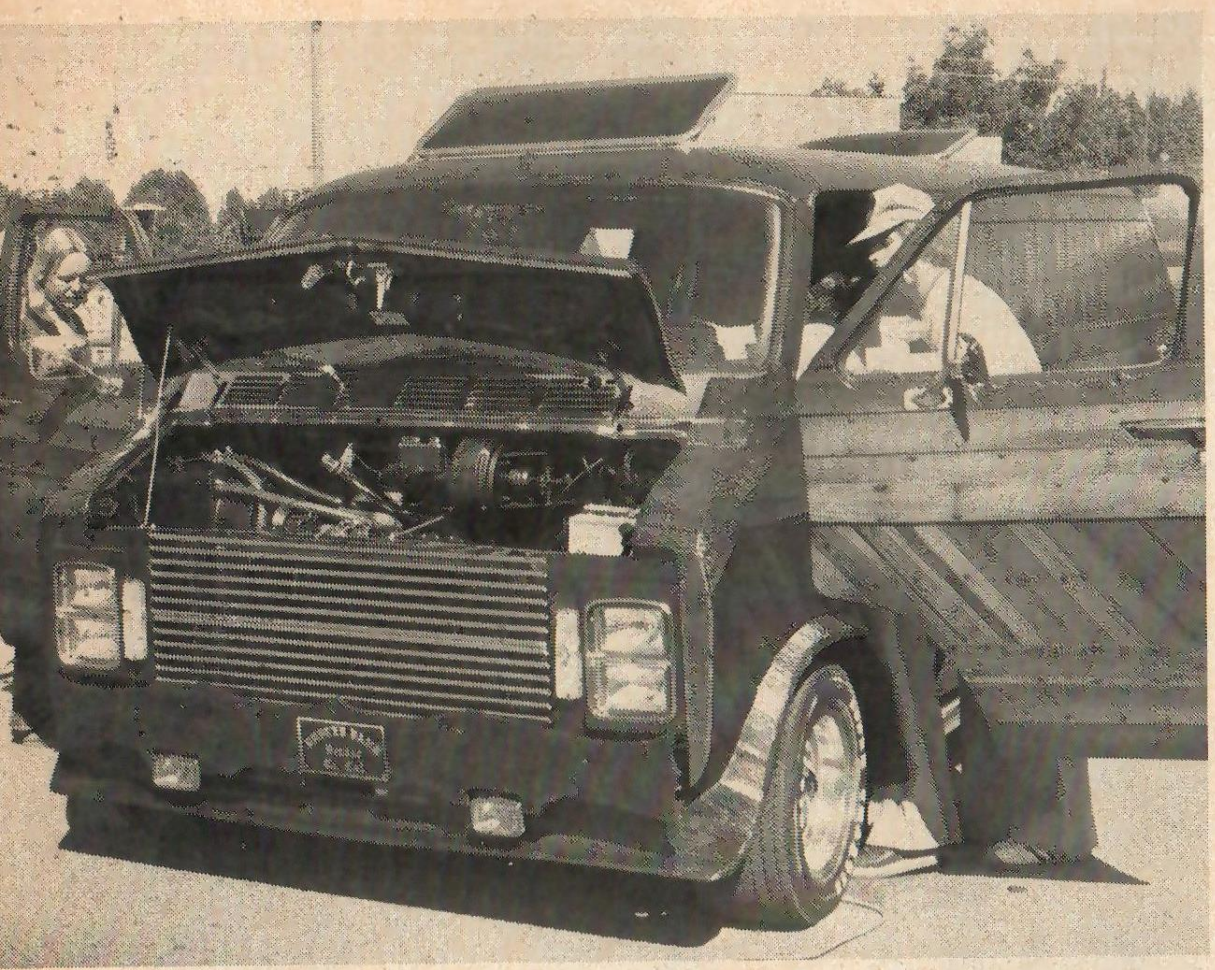
dance Saturday night. Sunday was set aside for trophy presentations and raffle. It took almost three hours for the raffle because of the bunches of prizes which were donated. After all the ceremonies, the vanners packed up and headed out, some on their way home, others vacationing on the West Coast for a few days. This three-day hap was definitely a fun weekend.

RIGHT—This fully muraled Chevy, Death Ryder, took Best Mural and 2nd Late Chevy honors. Owner: Dave LeFranc, Custom Carriages.

LEFT—Some people, like Manny from MRK Vans, are walking refreshment stands. But Manny's beer belt, and beer weren't for sale.



ABOVE—As usual, there were some aftermarket manufacturers displaying and selling van goodies. The Van Warehouse had a bunch.



ABOVE—At the van show on Saturday, there were some new and different custom tricks. Here, instead of using a conventional trunk, a wine barrel is utilized for the extra storage.

LEFT—For the most part, vanners try to individualize their rides. This Ports O' Call van is a premium example. Real wood was used throughout on this United Vans Berdoo Dodge.

LEFT—Harold Olson barely finished his trick Dodge for this King City hap. Subtle body mods by Chuck Ridell, beautiful orange candies by Rod Powell, and velvet interior are superb.

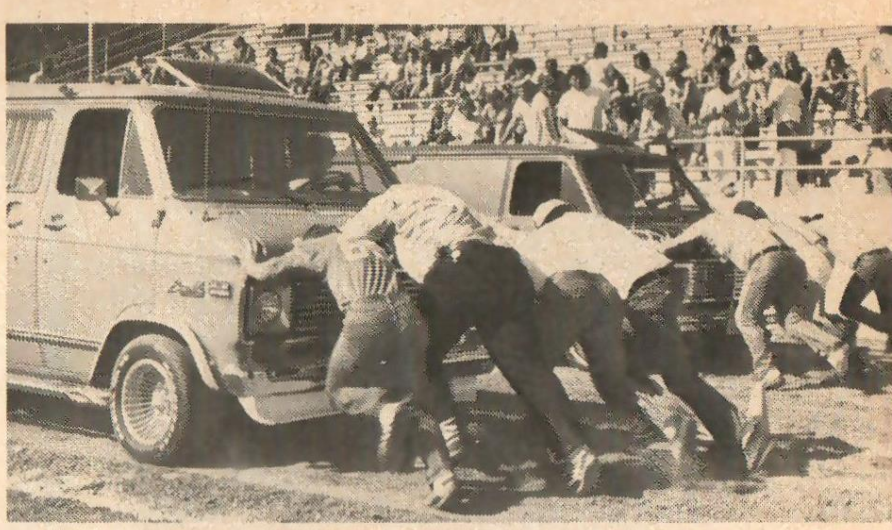
ABOVE—You've heard of matching vans before right? This pair of Paddy Wagons are nicely done. More and more go cart vans are being built.

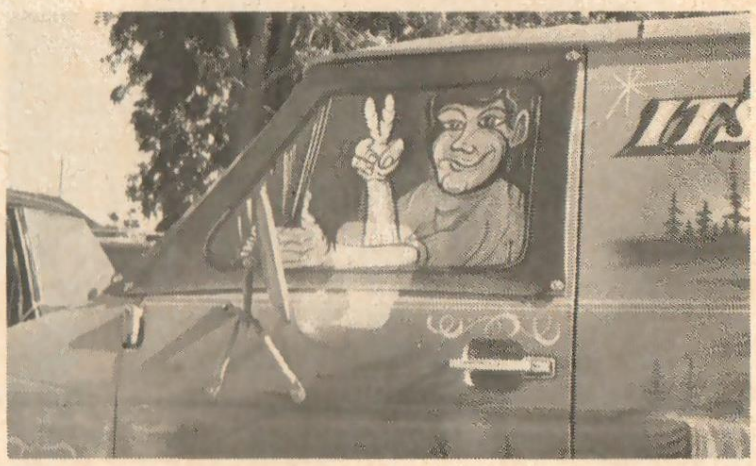
LEFT—The van cross was the favorite event of the happening again. The crowd really got excited when Don Hastings went through the course in his supercharged, uncorked Chevy, the Iron Butterfly. This horsepower maker really kicked up the dirt.

KING CITY 77

BELOW—This year's raffle and trophy presentations took place in the big exhibition hall. As you can see, everybody was there.

RIGHT—The van push contests were competitive. Rockin' Vans of San Jose pushed to victory.





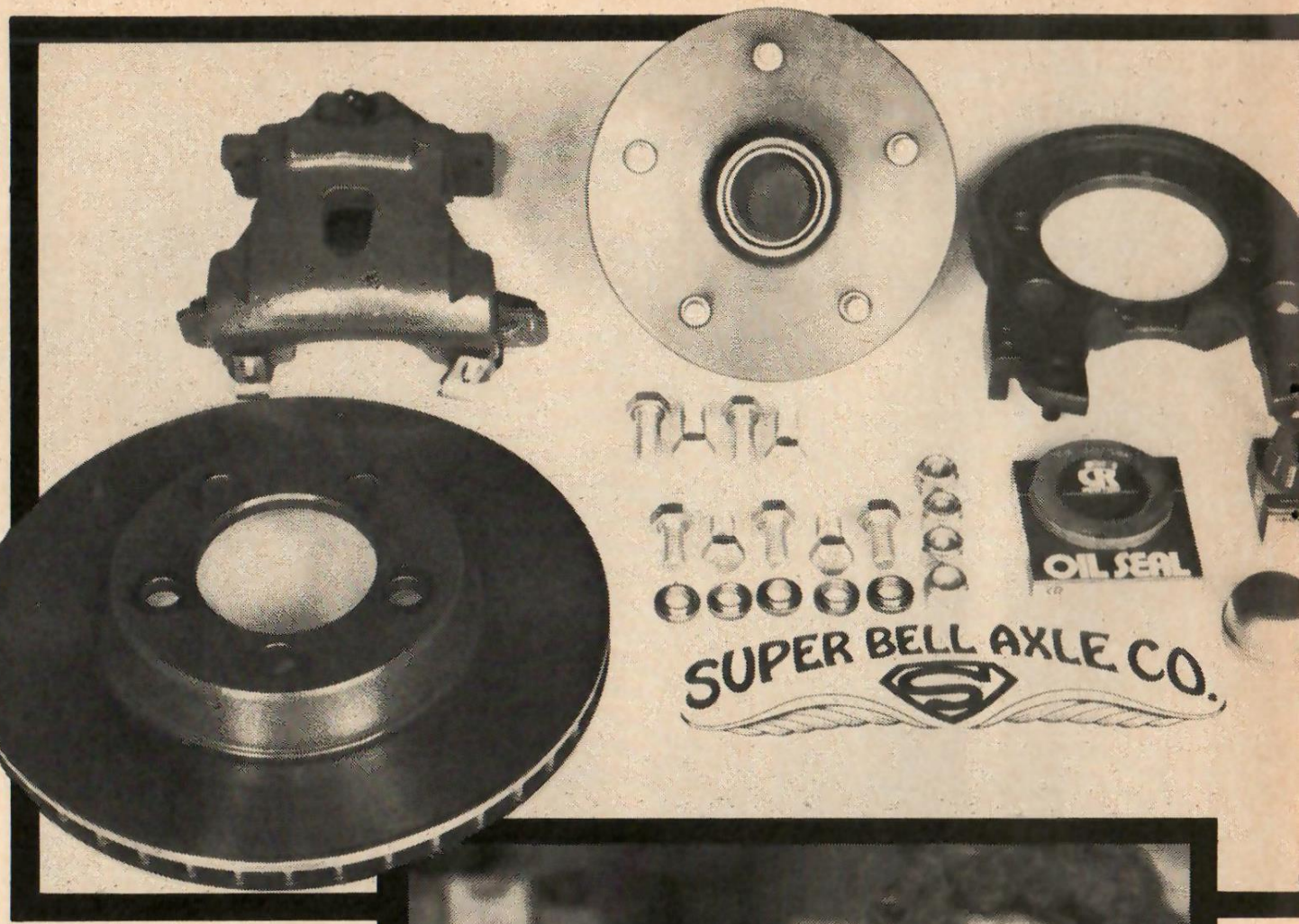
Roy Koch of Evergreen Vans (they got Hard Luck trophy—many breakdowns) dismantled his 327, only to find two cracked cylinder heads.

Mike Macomber, of Central Coast Rollin' Rooms, modified a wheelchair lift for easy operation for his '75 Dodge, Vandicapper I.

Best of Show (Individual)	Ken Jones — The Harem.
Best of Show (Professional)	Phil Carpenter — 2001 — Star Wars
Club Participation — Large	Channel Island Vans — 57%
Club Participation — Medium	Van Masters — 93%
Club Participation — Small	Gilroy Vans — 100%
Best Interior — Home	Ken Jones. The Harem
Best Interior — Factory	Phil Carpenter. 2001 — Star Wars
Best Enamel Paint	Dave Dionne. Ind.
Best Lacquer Paint	Harold Olsen. Road Gang Vans
Best Mural	David Le Franc. Custom Carriages
Long Distance Club	Thunderbay Vans. Ontario, Canada
Long Distance Individual	Robbie Robertson. Pickering. Ont. (3880 Miles)
Cleanest Club Camp	Visalia Vans
Oldest Vanner	Ed Henriques. Road Knights
Hard Luck	Evergreen Vans. Washington
Ugliest Van	Bruce Bywaters. Ind.
Best Exhibitors Display	Old Tyme Photo's
Most Photogenic	Mike Hotten. N.W. Vans
1st Place Obstacle Race (Women)	Sherry Roberts. Big Valley Vans
1st Place Obstacle Race (Men)	Sal Zamora. Vanishing Breed
1st Place Van Push	Rockin Vans. San Jose
1st Place Tug O War	Big Valley Vans. Stockton
1st Place Volleyball	Van Masters. Los Angeles
1st Place Van Cross (Women)	Terry Amado. Ridgerunners
1st Place Van Cross (Men)	Ed Jackson. C.C.R.R.
NAVA Award of Excellence —	
Special Award	Three River Vans — Pittsburgh. Penn.
Special Award	Steve Stringer — Bedford England
Special Award	Bruno — King City Fair Maintenance
Special Award	Anita Johnson — Fair Manager
1st Place Professional	Ports O'Call
2nd Place Professional	Joe McClenahan. Inc.
1st Place Late Chevy	Don Hastings. Ind.
2nd Place Late Chevy	Dave Le Franc. Custom Carriages
1st Place Late Dodge	Harold Olsen. Road Gang
2nd Place Late Dodge	Don Ladue. Delta Vaner's
1st Place Late Ford	Gary Wilson. Aladdin Vans
2nd Place Late Ford	Dennis Talbot. Visalia Vans
1st Place Mid Ford	Eric Turnquist. Rainbow Truckers
2nd Place Mid Ford	Terry Fuller. Ozone Vans
1st Place Early Chevy	Edward Lozano. Green County Vans
2nd Place Early Chevy	Shawn Bork, Ind.
1st Place Early Dodge	Bob Englebeck. Ind.
2nd Place Early Dodge	Gregg Kennedy. Van Masters
1st Place Early Ford	Shelly Dugan. Ind.
2nd Place Early Ford	Herb Ruffin. Triple 4
1st Place Rear Engine	Mike Hoffman. Van Experience

The Super Bell Axle Company enjoys a reputation as one of the top manufacturers of hard-core street rod chassis parts. Their front axles and disc brake set-ups grace many of the country's finest early iron. Being into trucks as well as rods, the guys at Super Bell decided it was time for a first rate disc brake kit for F-100's. The result, a well engineered kit to put Mustang discs on any F-100 spindle through '56. The kit is a complete bolt-on. No machine work is necessary on either the spindle or the brake pieces.

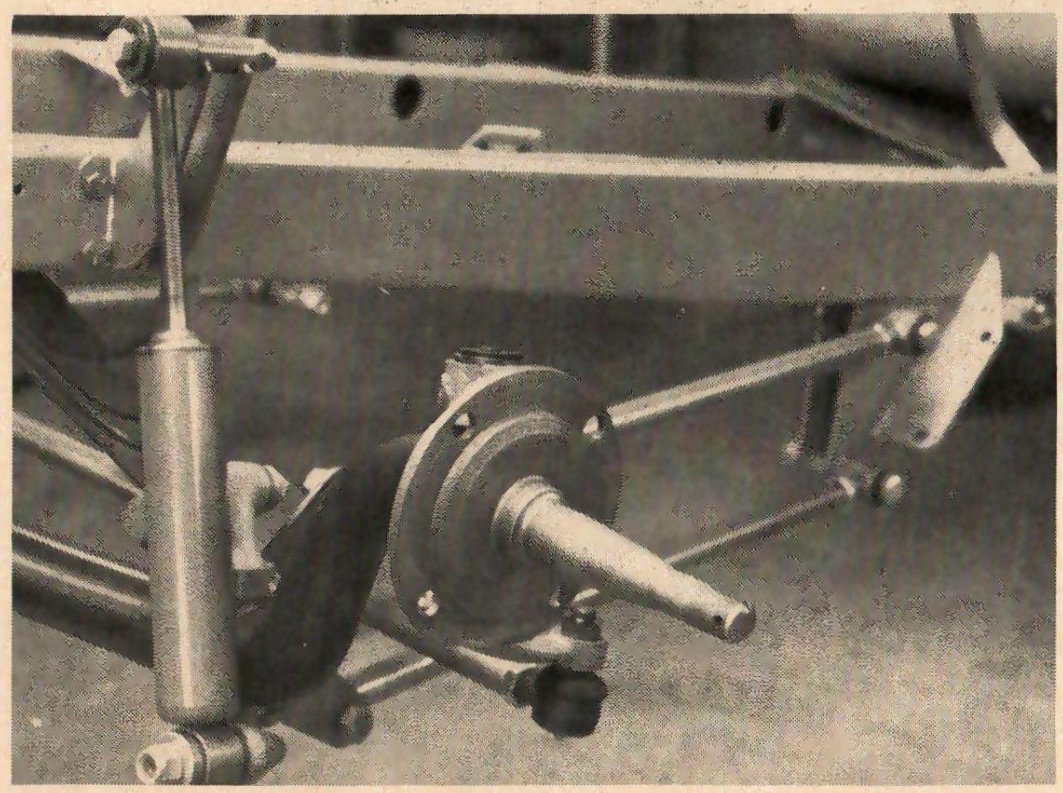
In addition to being a bolt-on, the Super Bell kit is complete down to new wheel bearings and grease seals. Included in the package are a pair of cast ductile steel caliper brackets, Super Bell's own hubs with bearing races and wheel studs already installed, rotor locating washers, and all the necessary hardware. The hubs can be ordered in any bolt pattern including stock F-100.



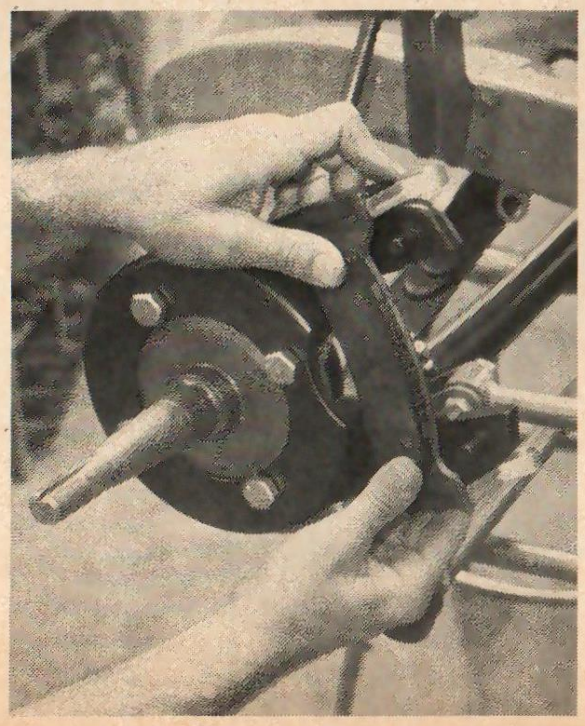
by Steve Coonan

SUPER BRAKES

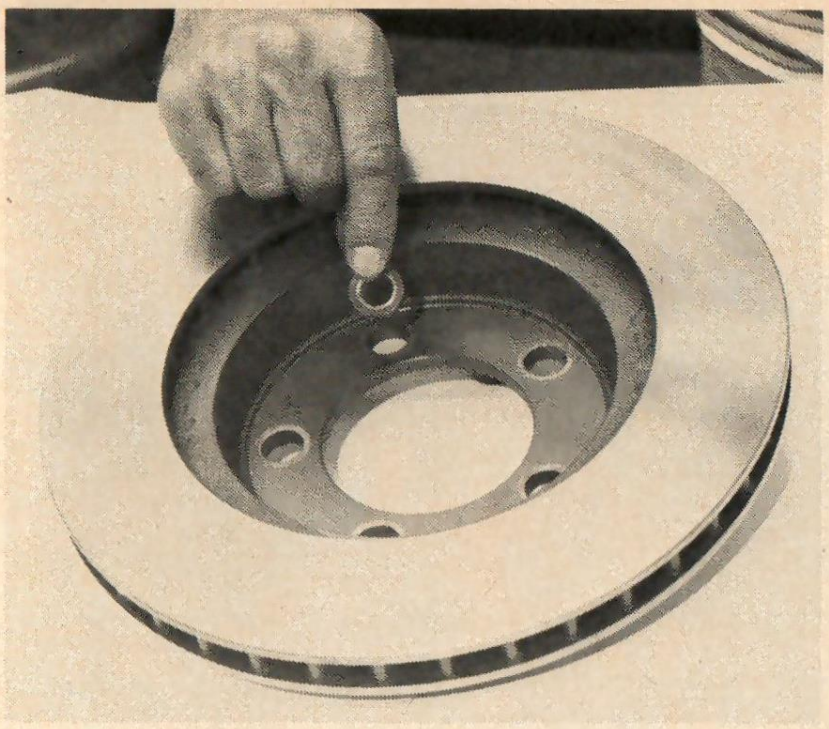
A NEW KIT FOR F100's



ABOVE—The starting point for the conversion is a pair of stock '56 or earlier F100 spindles. The swap is a complete bolt-on. No machine work is necessary. For the photos, we used a pair of F100 spindles on a Super Bell axled Model A chassis for simplicity.

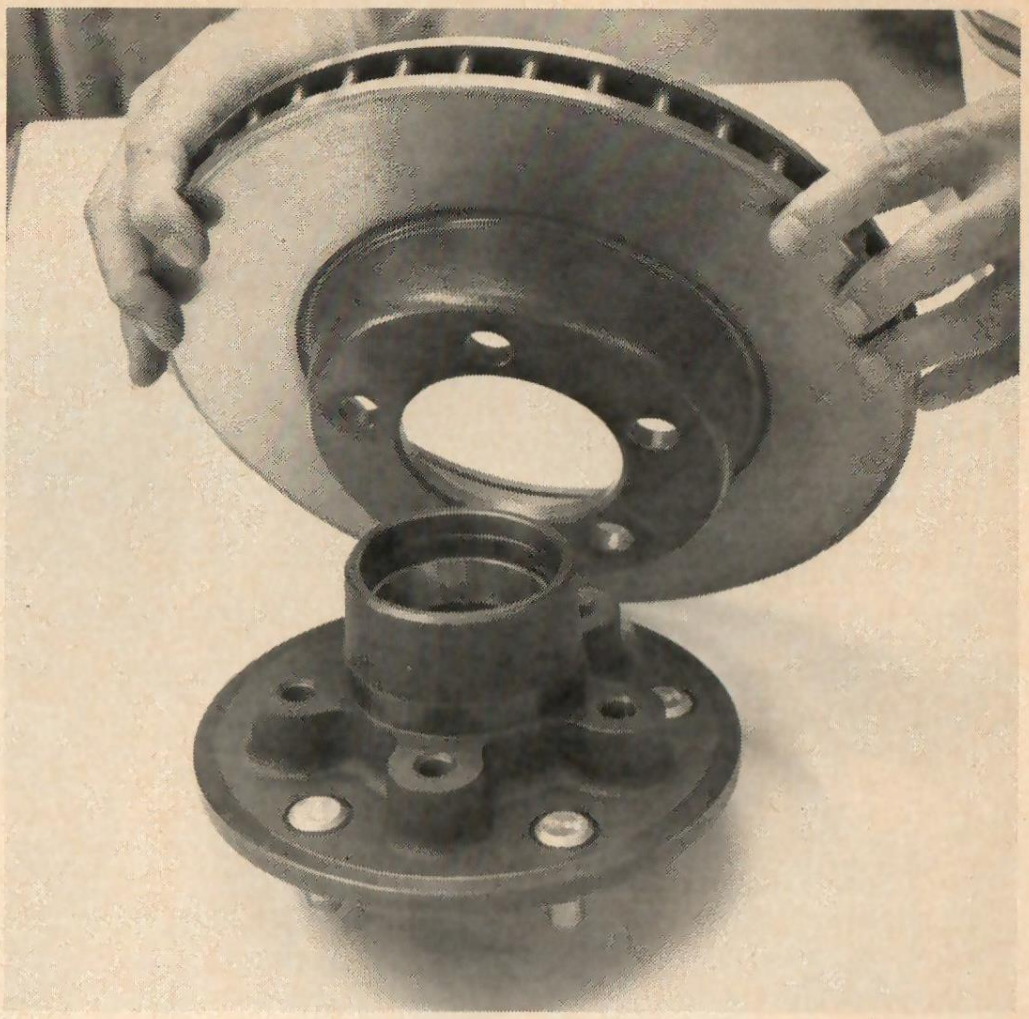


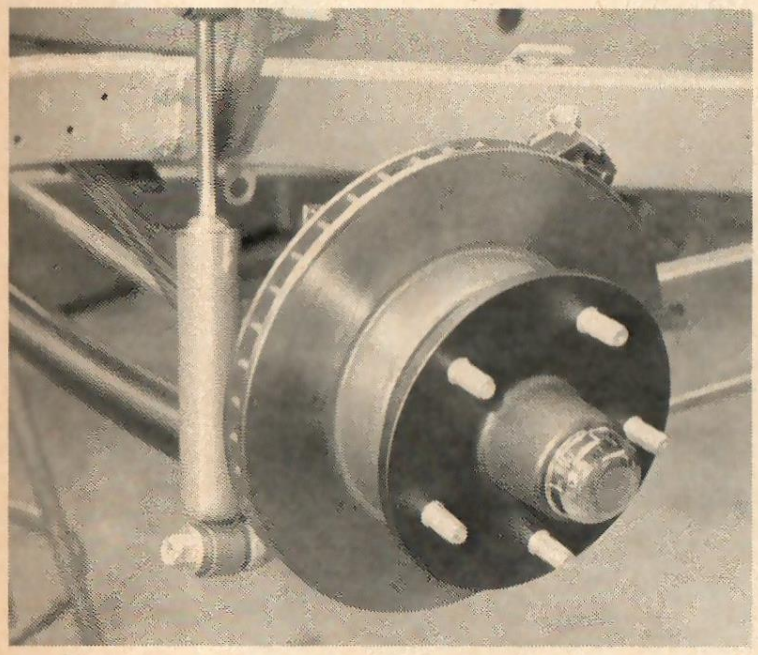
LEFT—The first step is to bolt the caliper bracket to the spindle, then the inside brake pad pops into place. The caliper bracket is a ductile casting which uses Ford type clips to hold the stock Mustang disc pad in place. The caliper mounts in rubber, just like the factory installation.



ABOVE—To match the stock rotors to their hubs, the guys at Super Bell came up with these locating washers, which fit into the backside of the rotors.

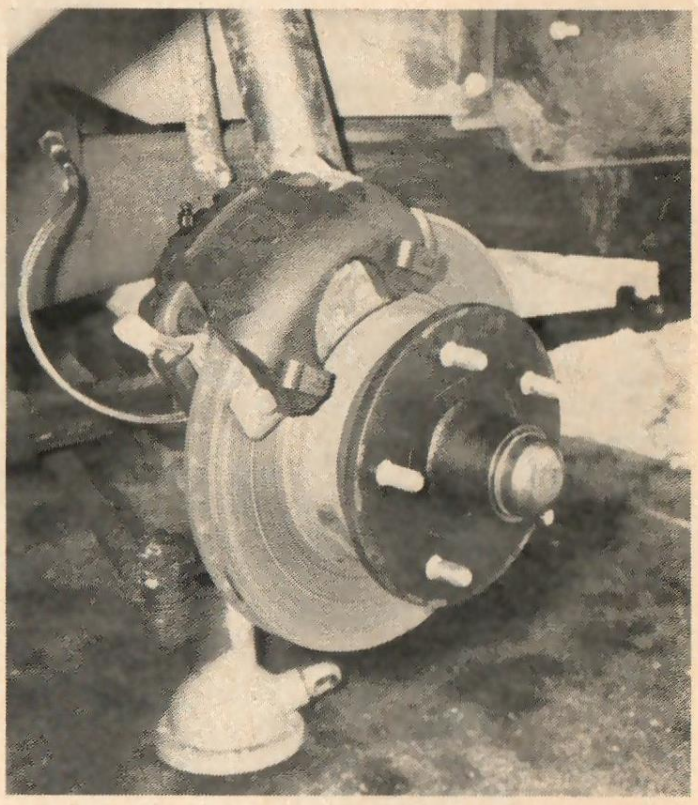
RIGHT—With the locating washers in place, the rotor can be bolted to the hub which comes in the kit. Bearing races come pre-installed in the hubs.





ABOVE—The rotor and hub assembly can then be attached to the spindle using the wheel bearings which Super Bell supplies.

RIGHT—The last step is to bolt the caliper to the bracket. The Super Bell steering arm will eliminate clearance problems.



ABOVE—And here's how the finished set-up looks on an F100. This installation was on a Chevy powered panel. After a short test drive we were convinced disc brakes are the way to stop.

The kit is so complete that only a pair of Mustang rotors and calipers need be added before the brakes can be bolted-on.

Discs from any '68-'73 Mustang along with the discs from most Ford and Mercury intermediate cars of the same period will work with the kit. To ensure that you get the right brakes, take one of the Super Bell brackets to the junkyard when you buy the brakes. If the caliper will bolt to the bracket then you have the right brakes. Naturally, Super Bell can supply you with a complete year and model listing of what brakes will fit.

Besides being a complete bolt-on, the Super Bell set-up has several other features in its favor. The bracket retains the stock Ford rubber caliper mountings. Instead of bolting the caliper solidly to a flame cut bracket, the Super Bell hubs mount the wheel in a stock position as well as allows the use of 14 inch wheels. The stock positioning keeps the front end geometry within factory tolerances. Moving the wheel centerline outboard as is often done in disc brake conversions, can play havoc with handling as well as drastically shorten wheel bearing life.

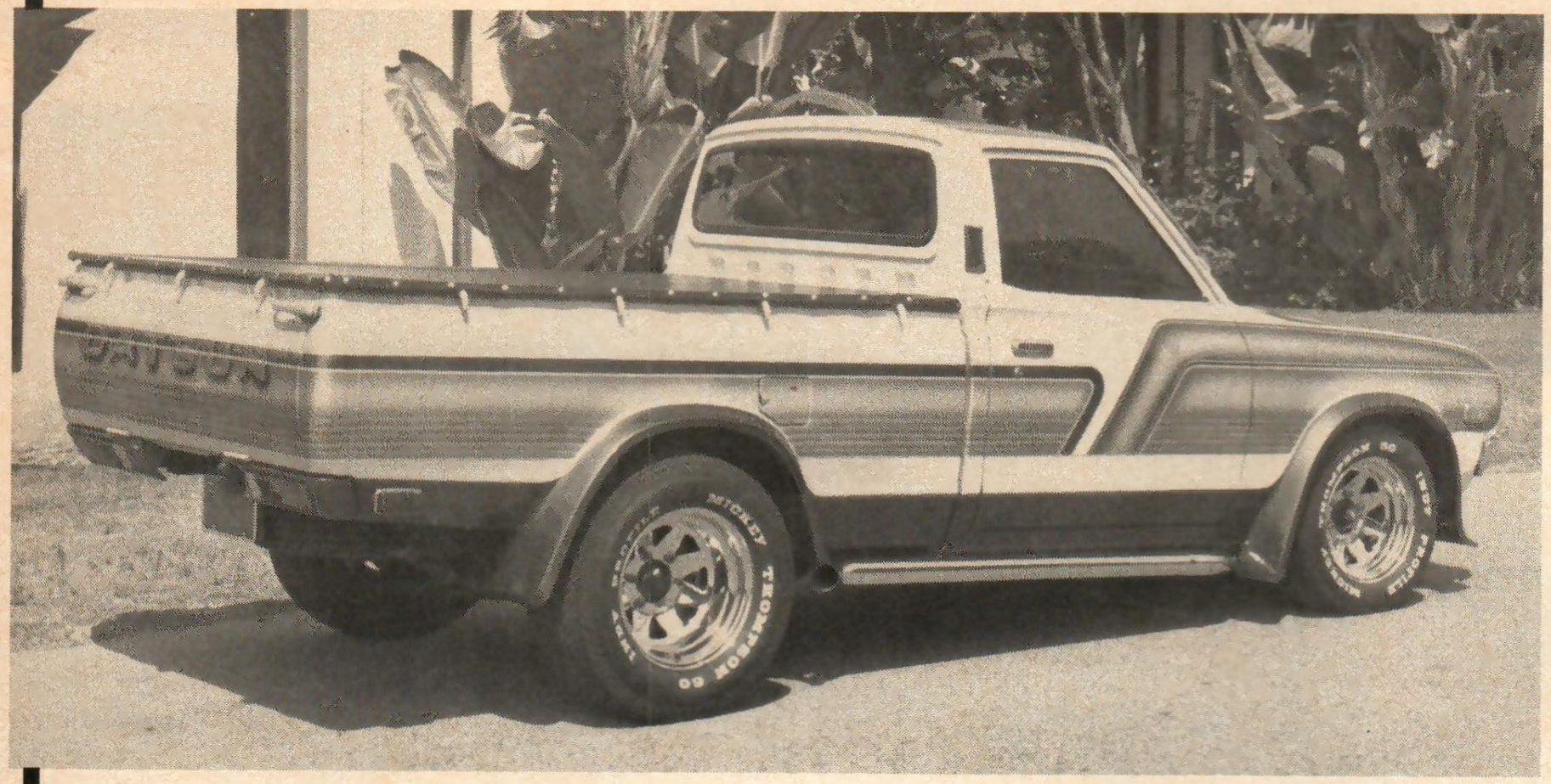
Jim Ewing and Vic Leon of Super Bell are just now getting into full production of the Mustang kits. The price for the complete package has been set at $219.50. At first glance, this may seem a little steep, but when you stop to consider you'll be laying out additional money for only the rotors and calipers the price seems more reasonable. There are no hard to find odd-ball bearings to buy, and best of all no machine shop bill to pay.

Until now, Super Bell has dealt exclusively with the manufacture of parts for street rods. The F-100/Mustang brake kit is the first in a forthcoming line of truck oriented products Vic has been toying with his own '56 pickup more than ever recently, so it shouldn't be long before Super Bell is into trucks full force. You can write them at 335 Genoa St., Unit G, Monrovia, CA 91016 or call (213) 358-6947.

BLUE FLAME

Here's a colorful mini-truck done up by the crew at Color Creations

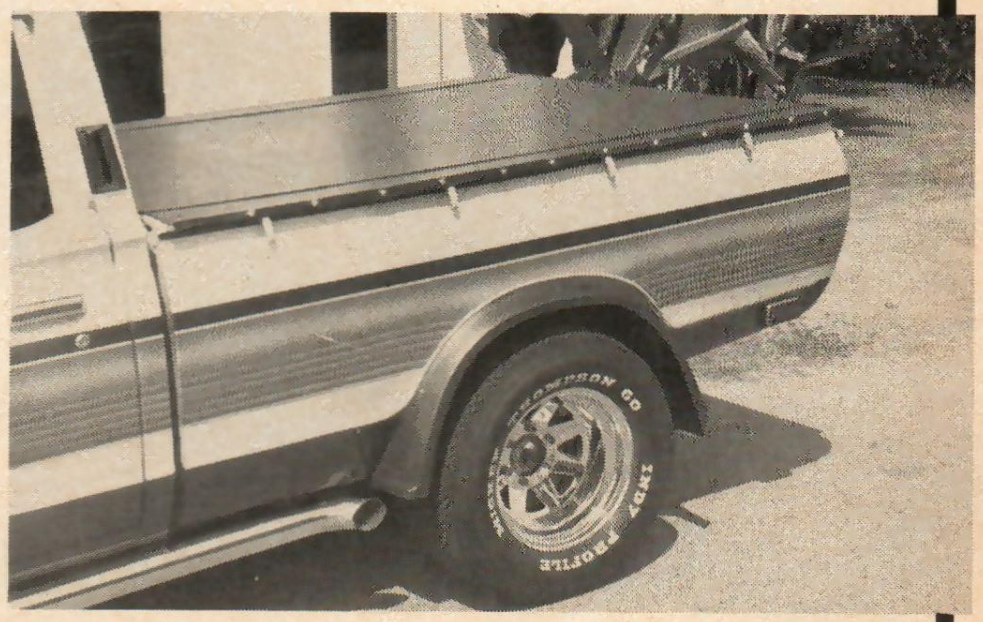
photography Robert K. Smith



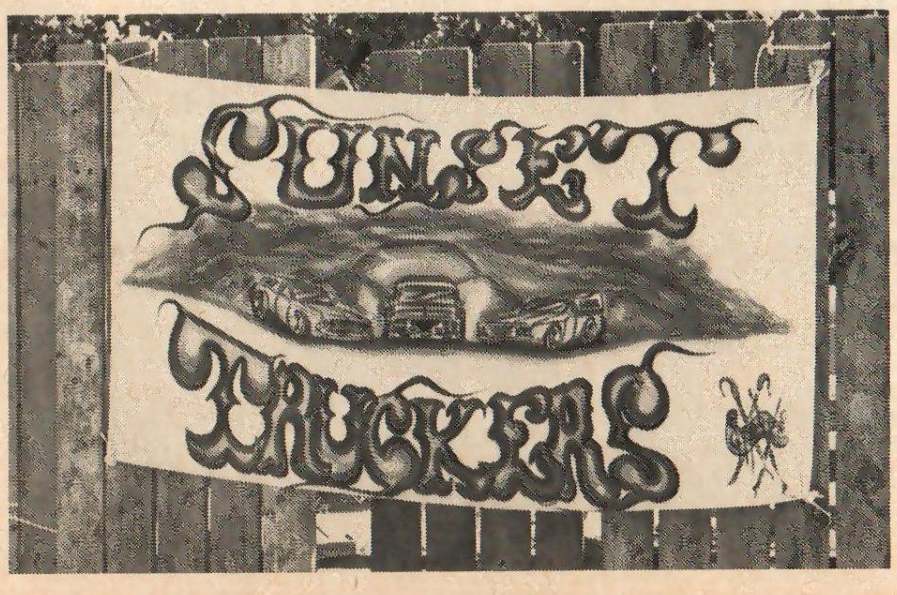
Steve spent nearly three grand to get his '73 Datsun lookin' the way it is today. Exotic paint work was done by Mike Cegielski of Color Creations in Santa Ana, CA.

The interior was also handled by the crew at CC. Features include diamond pleated crushed blue velour with black naugahyde, AM/FM/8 track, covered stock wheel.

Under the flamed hood is a 1600cc engine with Offenhauser intake manifold, Doug Thorley header. Check out blended front spoiler and flares. This daily driver is super clean throughout.



Other exterior highlights are black naugahyde tonneau cover, molded rear flares, sidepipes, chrome spokers with Mickey Thompson tread at all fours.



ABOVE LEFT—The way to go to Soledad is with your club. Park together wagontrain camp style, then kick back and party.

ABOVE—The "hill" at Soledad is always the sight of a great hill climb. This fat treaded Datsun is well on the way to the top.

LEFT—Like we said, clubs are a big part of Soledad, and the Sunset Truckers found a covenient fence to hang their banner.

SOLEDAD BREAKOUT

by Steve Coonan

The Soledad Breakout is the premiere mini-truck event. It's the one happening that offers nearly everything a trucker could want from a weekend outing. With an excellent location, good organization, plenty of fun type activities, and lots of super trick trucks, it's no wonder Soledad had gained the reputation as the one not to miss. Sponsored by Baja Trucks, each year the "Breakout" gets a little bigger and a little better. And with a showing of over 600 trucks, this year's event was undoubtedly the best yet.

As with any happening, the focal point of the event are the trucks. One of the main activities of the weekend was walking from campsite to campsite checking out what was new and maybe even getting a few ideas for your own project. A quick look at the "under construction" minis leads you to believe that trucks will be even wilder in the near future. Sunday morning's truck show demonstrated just how far mini-trucks have come in the last couple of years. Detailing is the byword, and the judges really had to be on their toes to pick out the subtle differences between the winners and the losers.

Of course, if you're not into the spit and polish routine, Baja Trucks provided more than enough to do. If you wanted to get your truck dirty, then the hill climb was the place to be. There was also club competition in volleyball, football, and the bat circle relay. For pure fun, the Soledad Sands giant slide and the pool were hard to beat. Night time festivities centered around partying to the sounds of live bands on both Friday and Saturday. Squeeze, the band for Saturday night, put on one of the best shows I've ever seen at a truck-in.

We could go on at great length describing the "Breakout," but we'll let the pictures tell the story. For a first hand look at mini truckin' at its best checkout "Breakout '78."

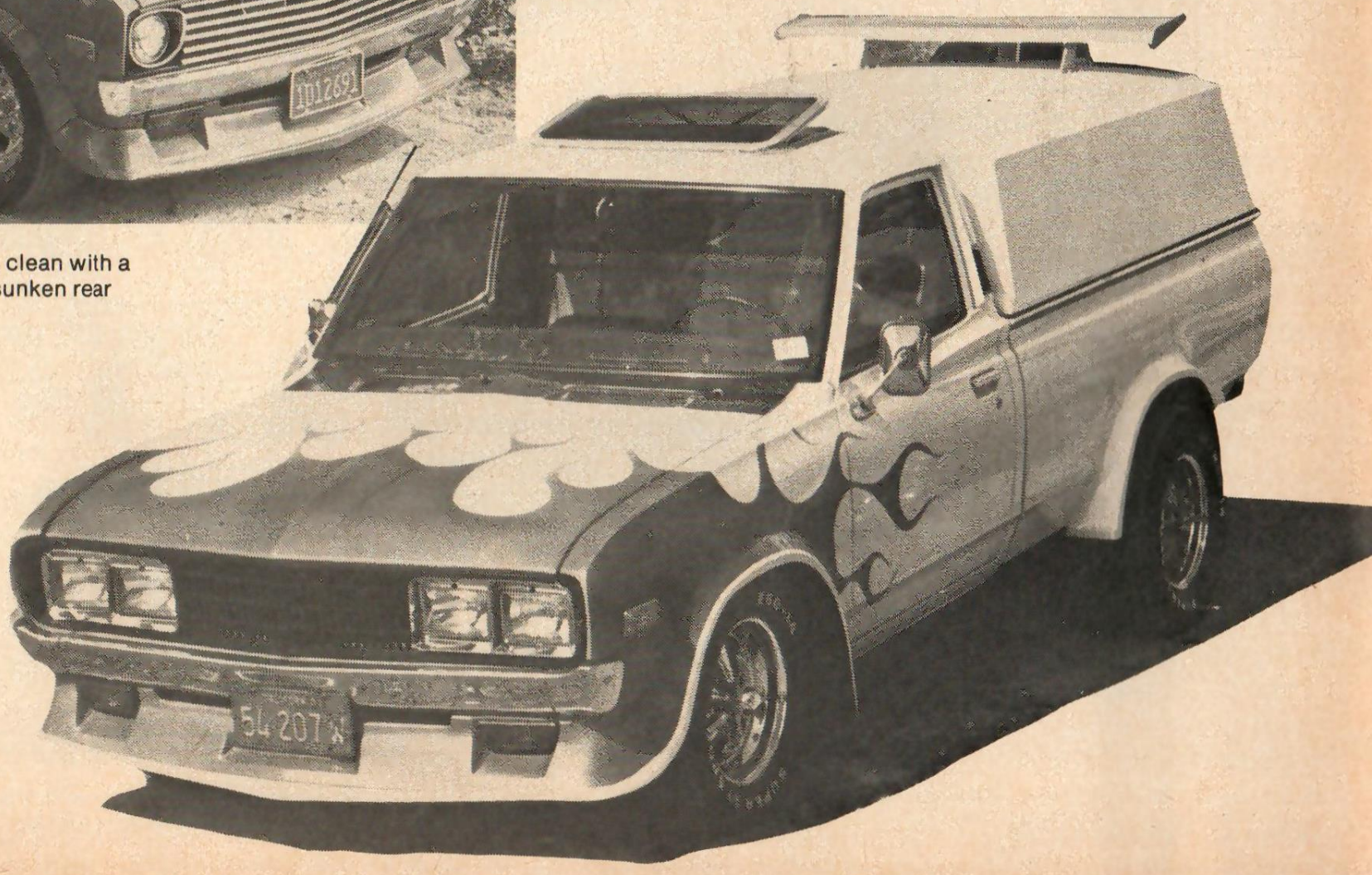
RIGHT—This wild Chevy Luv follows the current trend towards road racing bodywork for the street.

ABOVE—Fairway Ford and Roll-A-Long Vans unveiled their new custom Courier at Soledad. Whales tail bed, fender pods, and NASCAR hood are just some of the changes.

SOLEDAD BREAKOUT

TOP & ABOVE—The Palm Springs Small Trucks and the Northern California Mini Trucks out of Sacramento are two clubs that showed up in force. The Nor Cal Mini Trucks always take home some show gold, with trucks like Mike Robertson's Datsun on their roster.

ABOVE—Mark Gallegas' Datsun is clean with a five piece flare kit hiding fat tires, sunken rear plate, and burp orange paint.



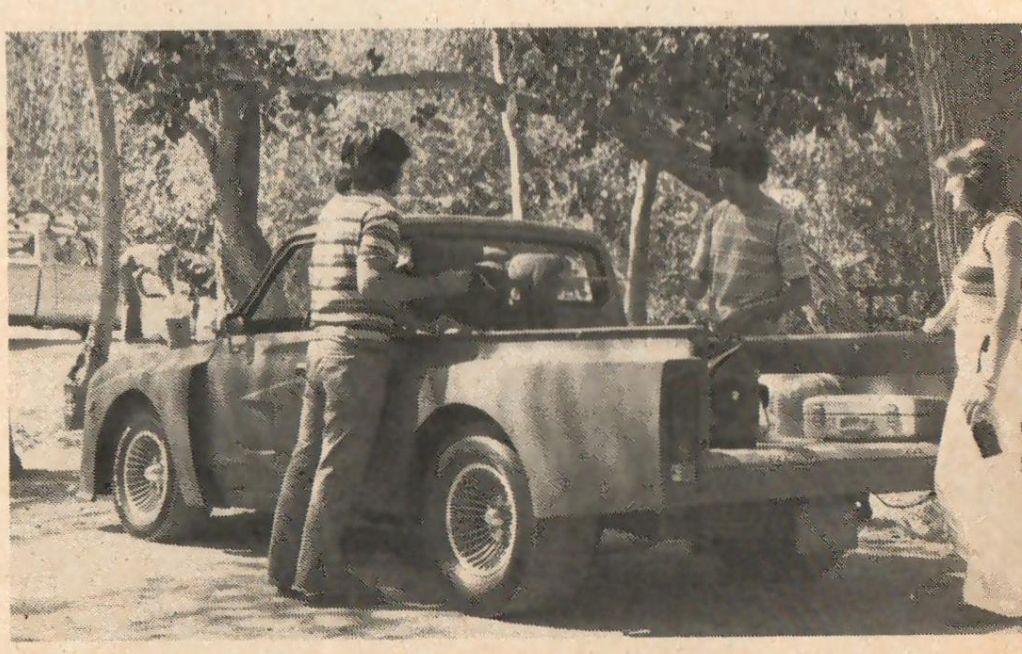
RIGHT—Typical of the better "shelled" minis' is this white and blue flamed Datsun. Features include molded flares and spoiler, quad square lights, blacked out grille, sunroof, and a shell mounted wing.

ABOVE— California Step Side Mfg. has just tooled up to produce beds for the new Courier. The silver one they had on display was real sharp.

ABOVE—The white Courier with the super big tube grille shows up everywhere we go. Each time we see it, it looks a little better.

ABOVE—The hill climb wasn't the only place the off-road look was evident at Soledad. No bumper, white spokes, make this Ford mean.

ABOVE—Russ of Deluxe Trucks has got his flamed and V-6'ed Courier looking super. Zoomies, Super Tricks add drag image.

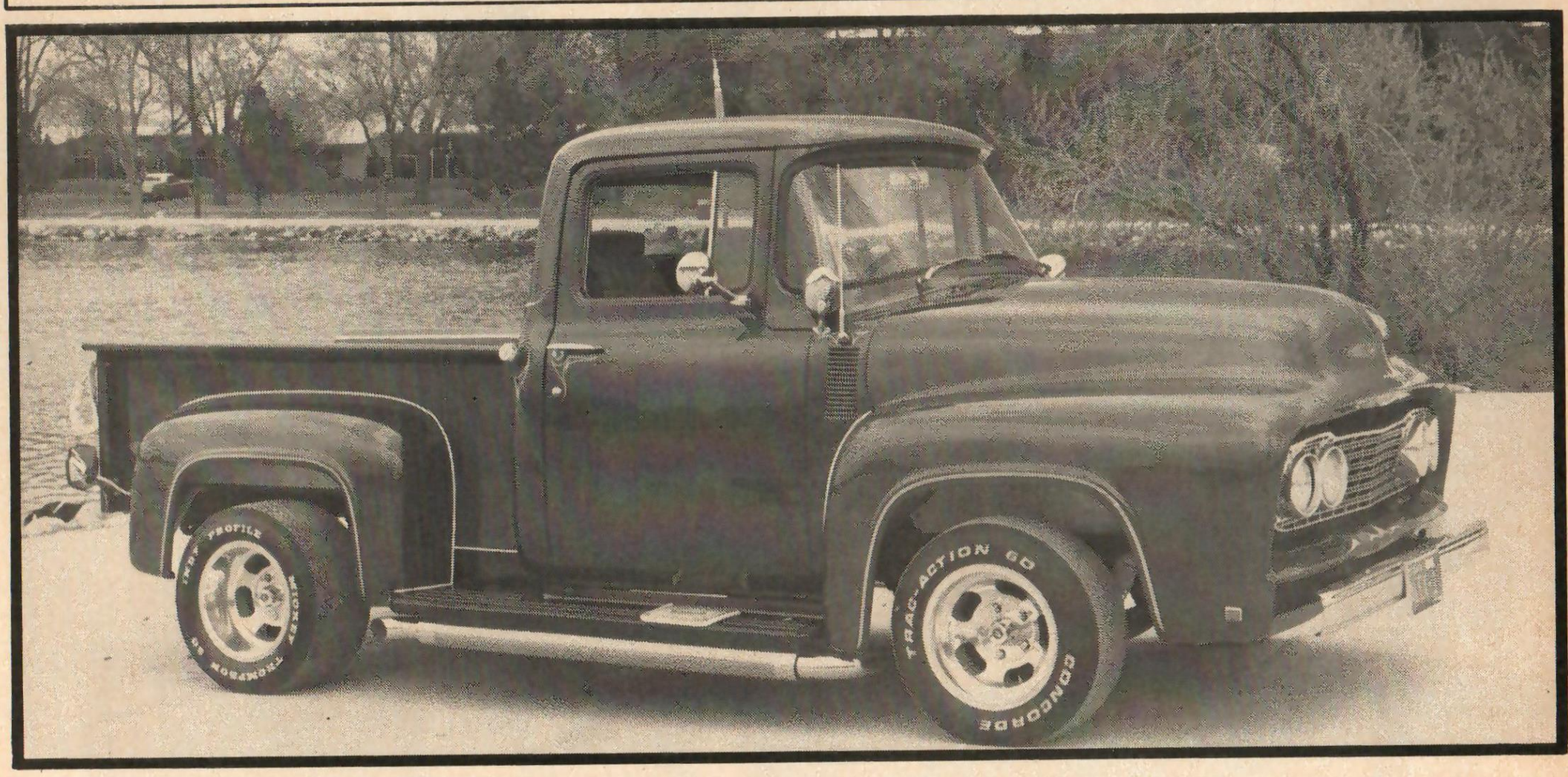


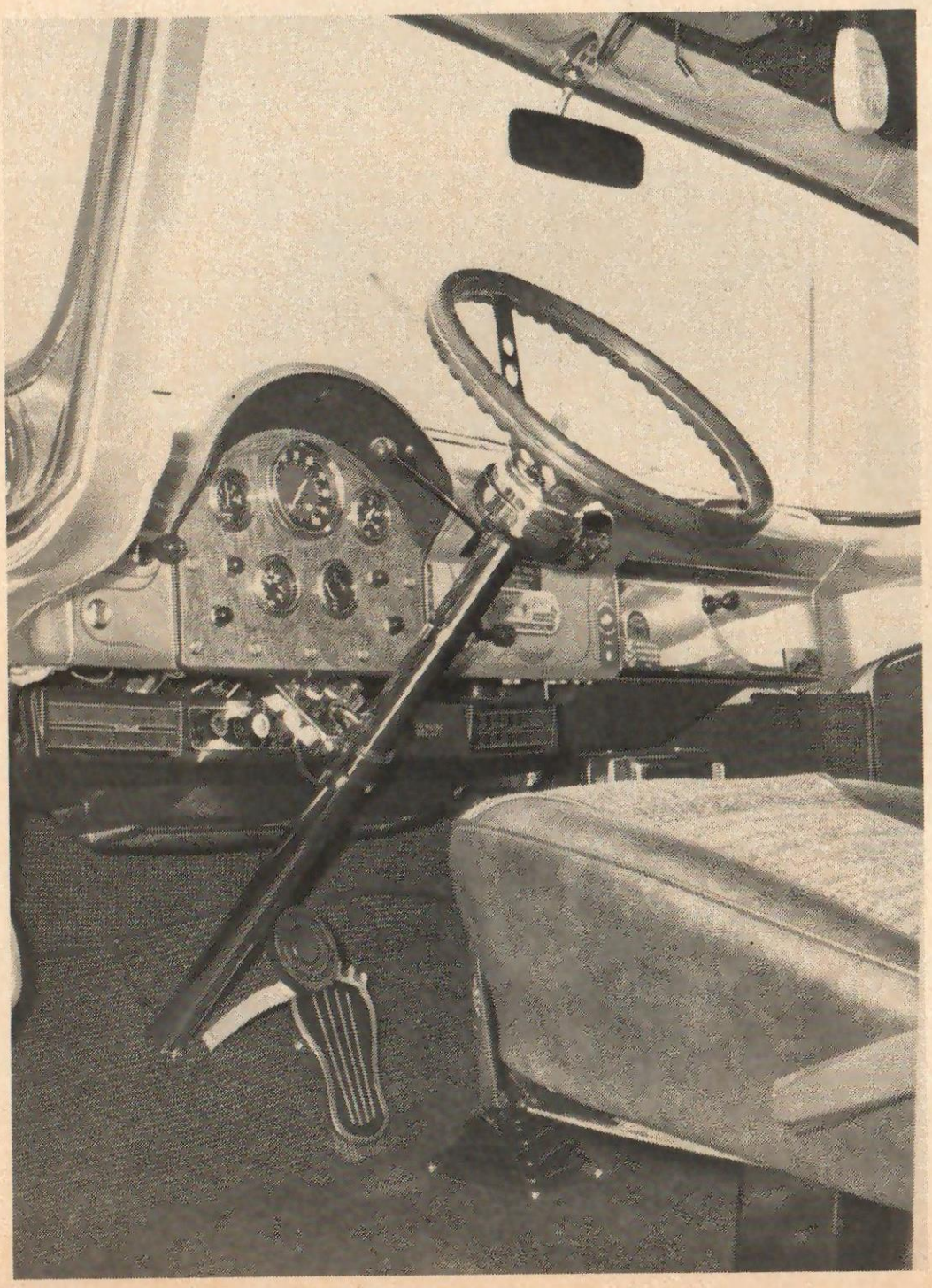
ABOVE—Getting ready to leave, Bruce Nicholson ties the last bit of baggage into the bed of his trans-am flared Datsun.

NIFTY FIVE-SIX

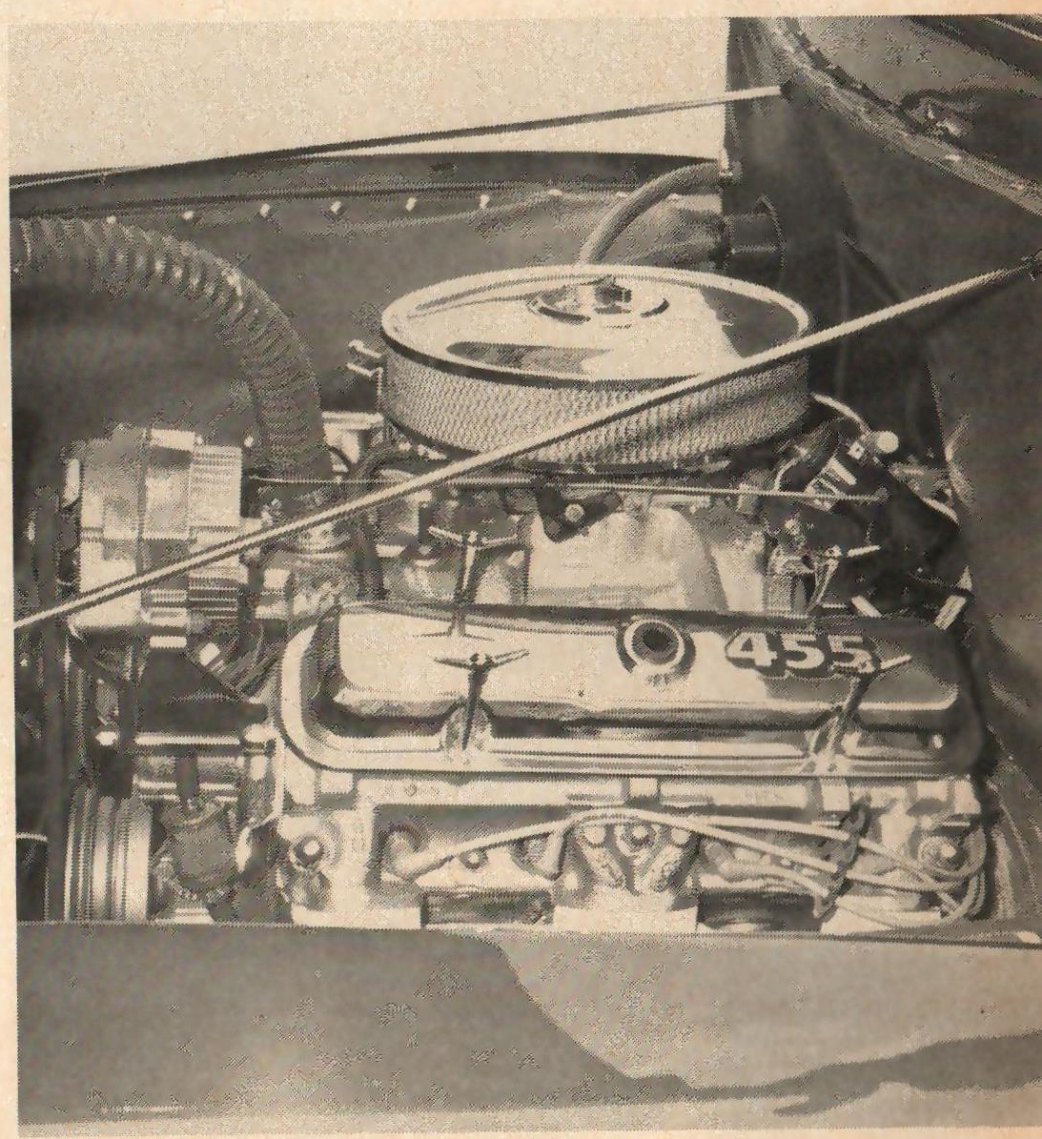
This Reno F-100 features many changes.

Alex Johnson
Reno, Nevada

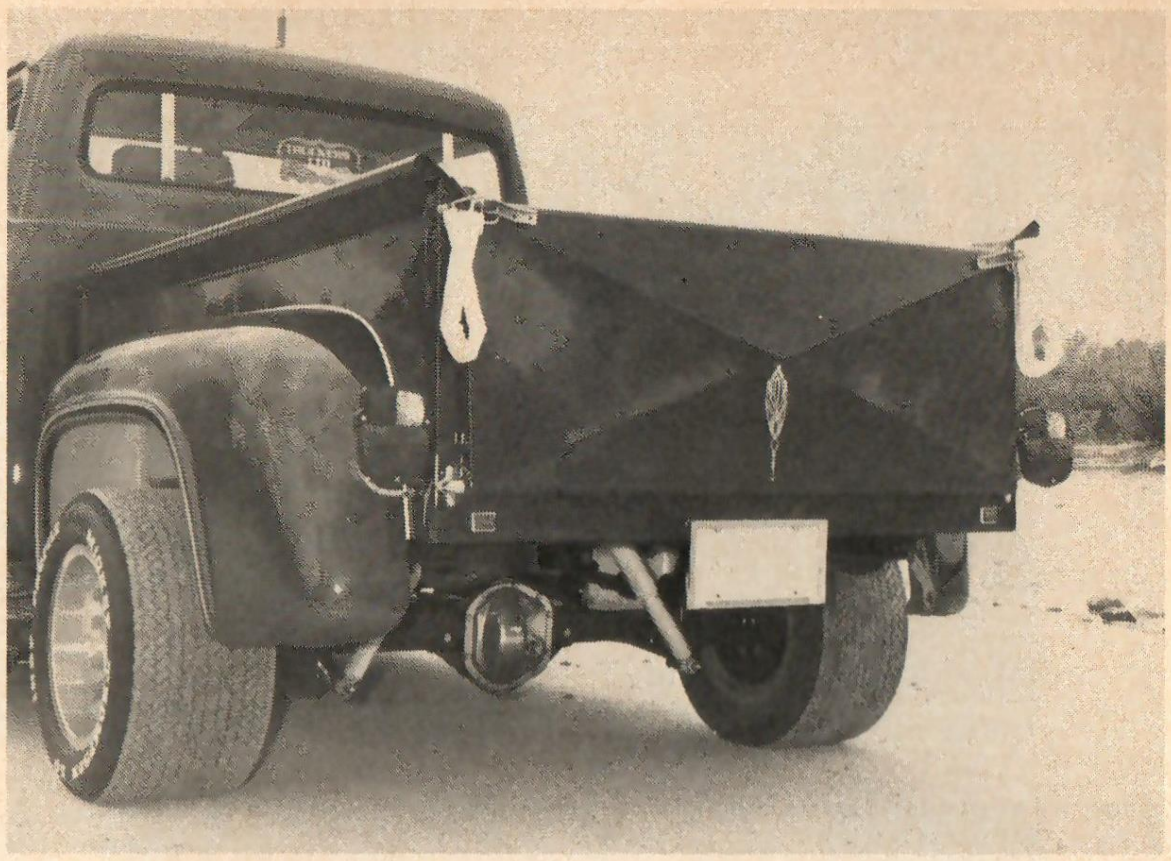




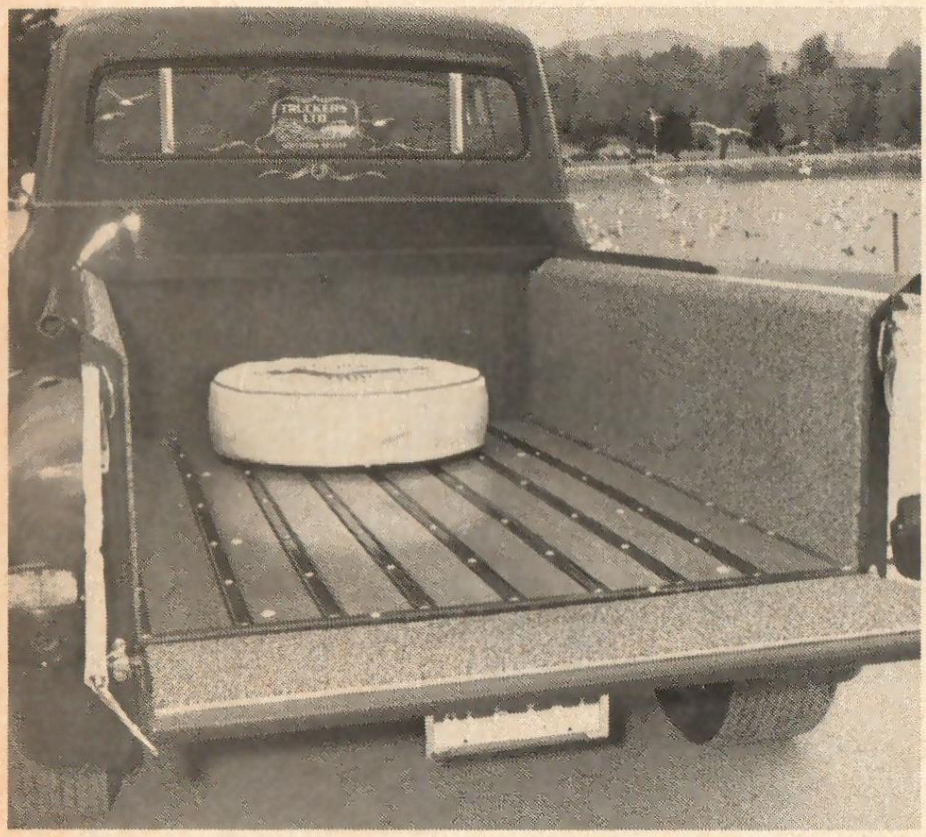
LEFT—Inside and out, Alex's F-100 is detailed. Check out the dash for example. It sports a custom dash cluster of gauges, chromed column, wood wheel, air conditioning, etc.

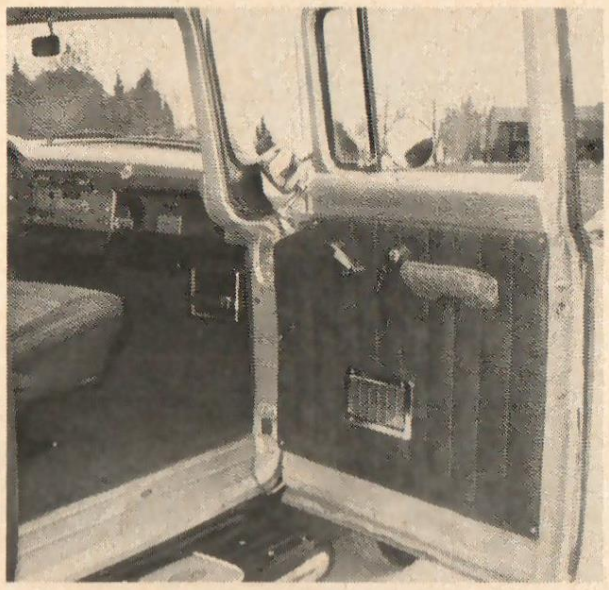


ABOVE—The stock Ford engine and trans were replaced with rebuilt and chromed 455 Pontiac and beefed turbo 400. Some features include electronic ignition, dual exhausts, and heavy duty radiator. Note firewall and inner fender naugahyde covers.



ABOVE—Mr. and Mrs. Don Bruener did a fine job with the upholstery. The '74 Firebird bucket seats were covered with naugahyde, utilizing cloth inserts.

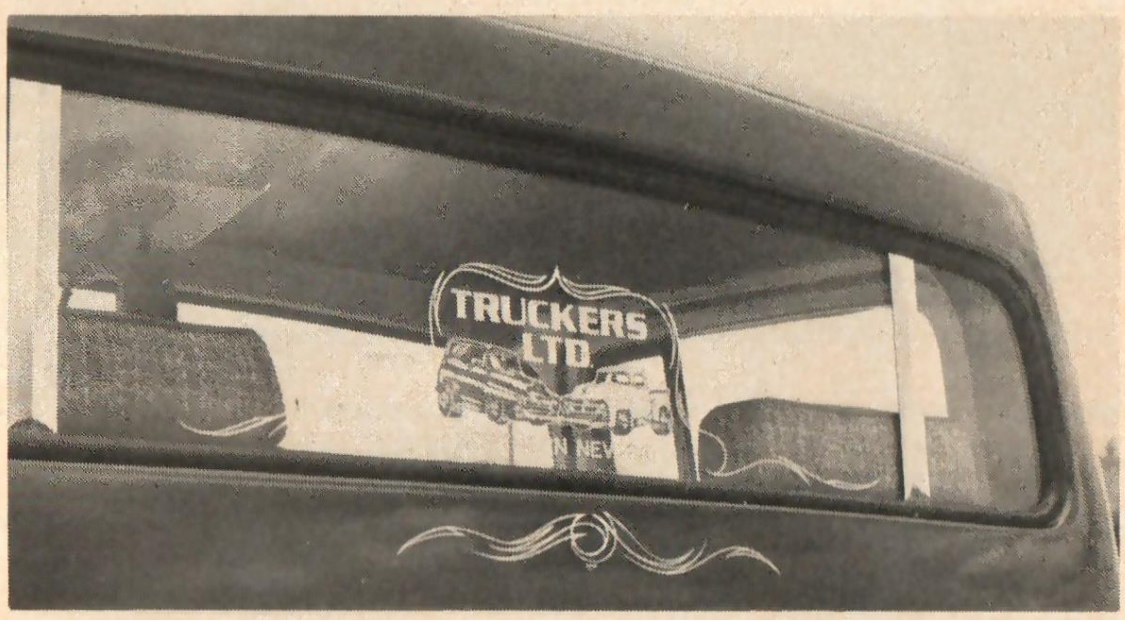




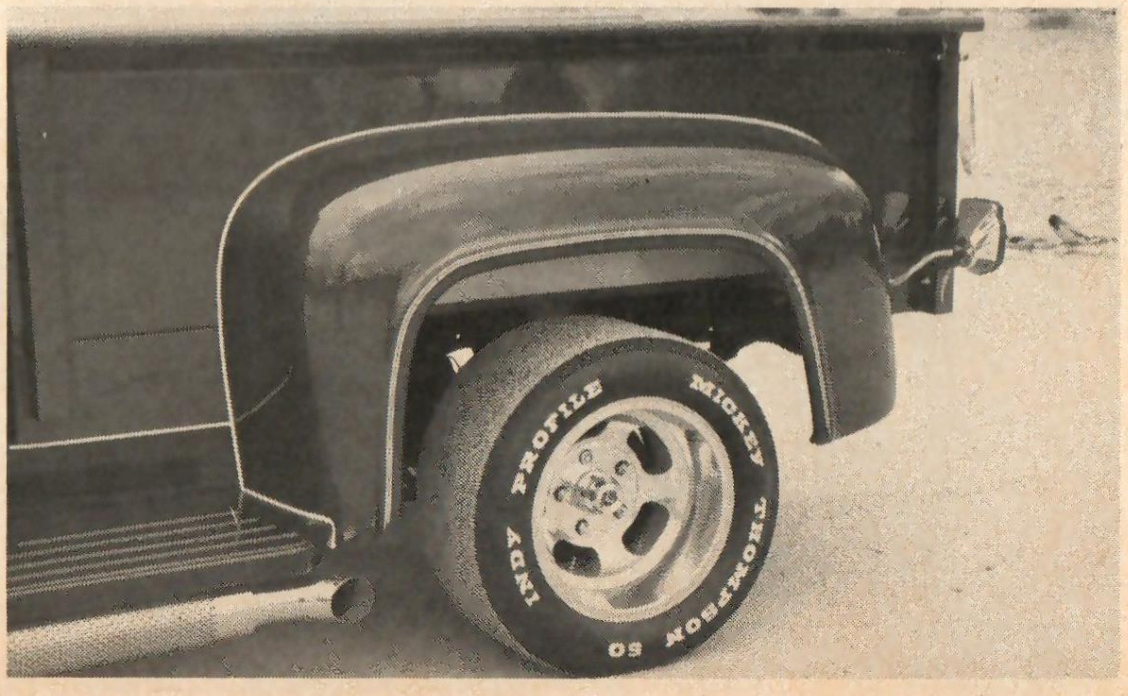
ABOVE—4.11 gears were installed in the stock differential, and the suspension was beefed. Rear of truck is accented with custom tailgate, chromed rear end cover, pinstriping, refurbished bed.

LEFT—Overall, Alex's pickup is outstanding. Things like chromed speaker grilles, custom door handles, spotlights, and more all add up to make this hauler a winner. Note chromed heater core.

BELOW—A member of Truckers Ltd. Northern Nevada, Alex enjoys club activities as well as just plain truckin'.

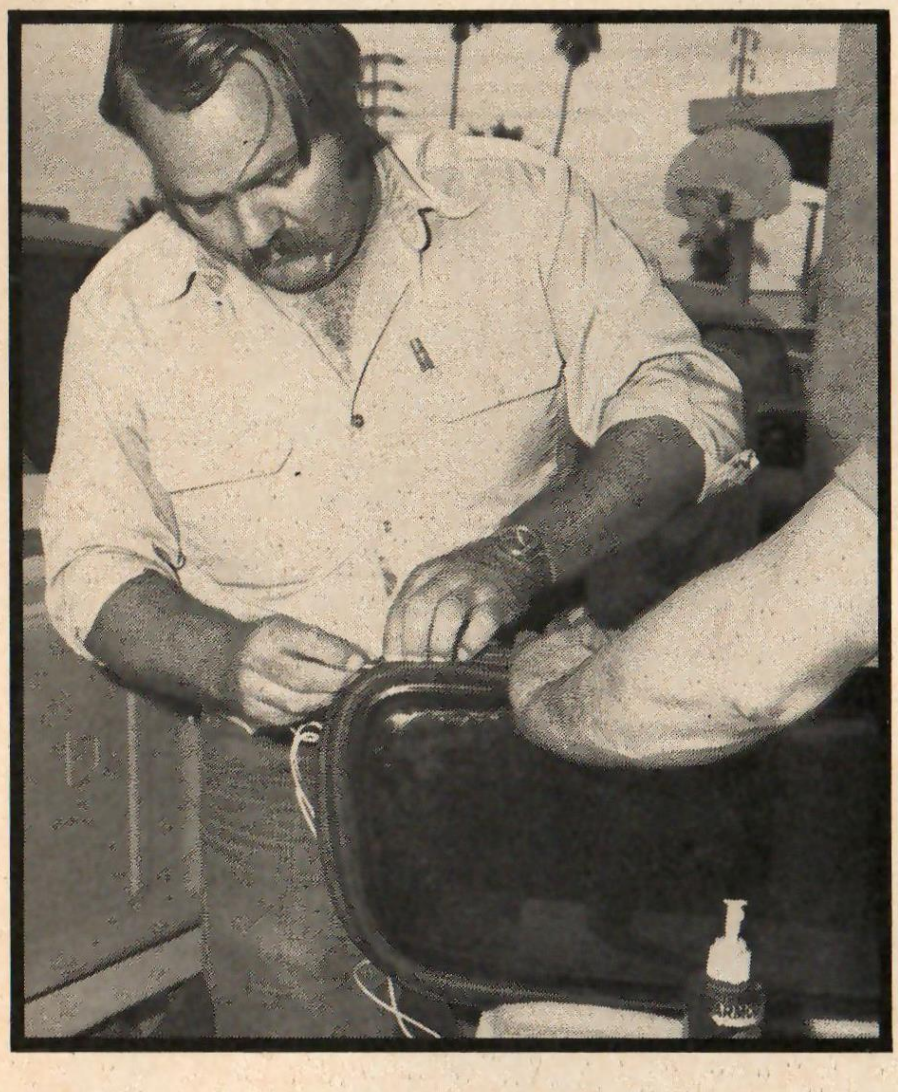


More custom tricks include '60 Ford grille, sidepipes, Appliance wheels, and body work and paint (Imron Midnight blue with clear) by Chuck Koepnick. Alex bought the truck for $900, then spent $6,500 to customize it (2 years).



A low buck way to change the shape of the F-100 . . .

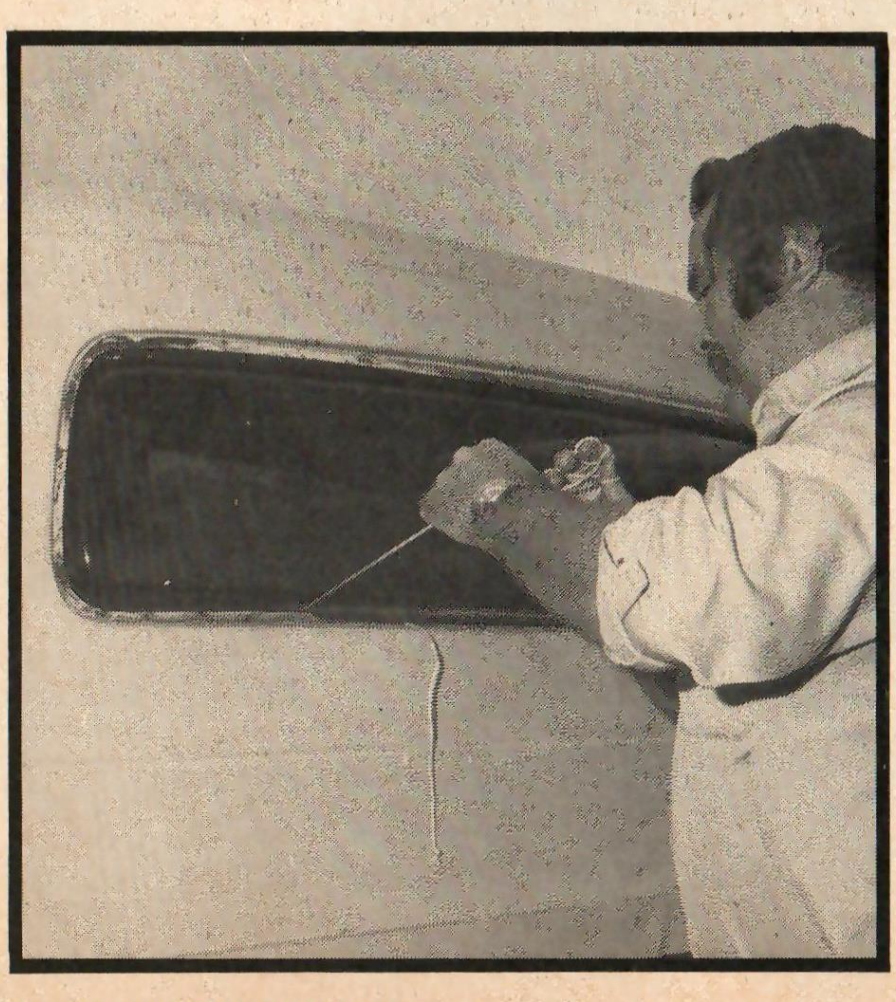
Bubble Windows

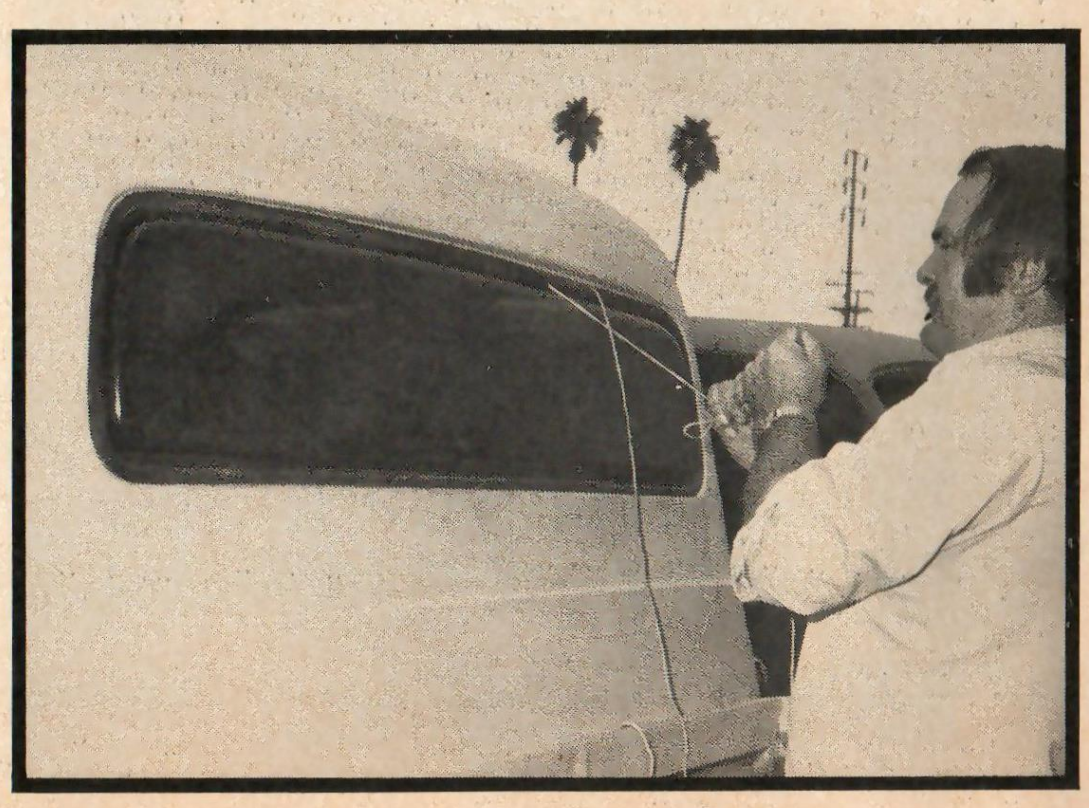


ABOVE — Bubble windows are manufactured out of vacuum-formed Plexiglas and come in several colors — smoke gray, yellow tint and clear are the most popular. "Little Windows" sell for $50. "Big Windows" are planned for the near future.

LEFT — Installation is a two man job, but an easy one. First fit the rubber molding around the window pane, then tuck a long piece of nylon cord into the retaining groove.

One guy holds the window in place on the cockpit side, and the outside man gently rolls the cord up and out, inch by inch, so that the rubber lip can curl over and around the metal edge.





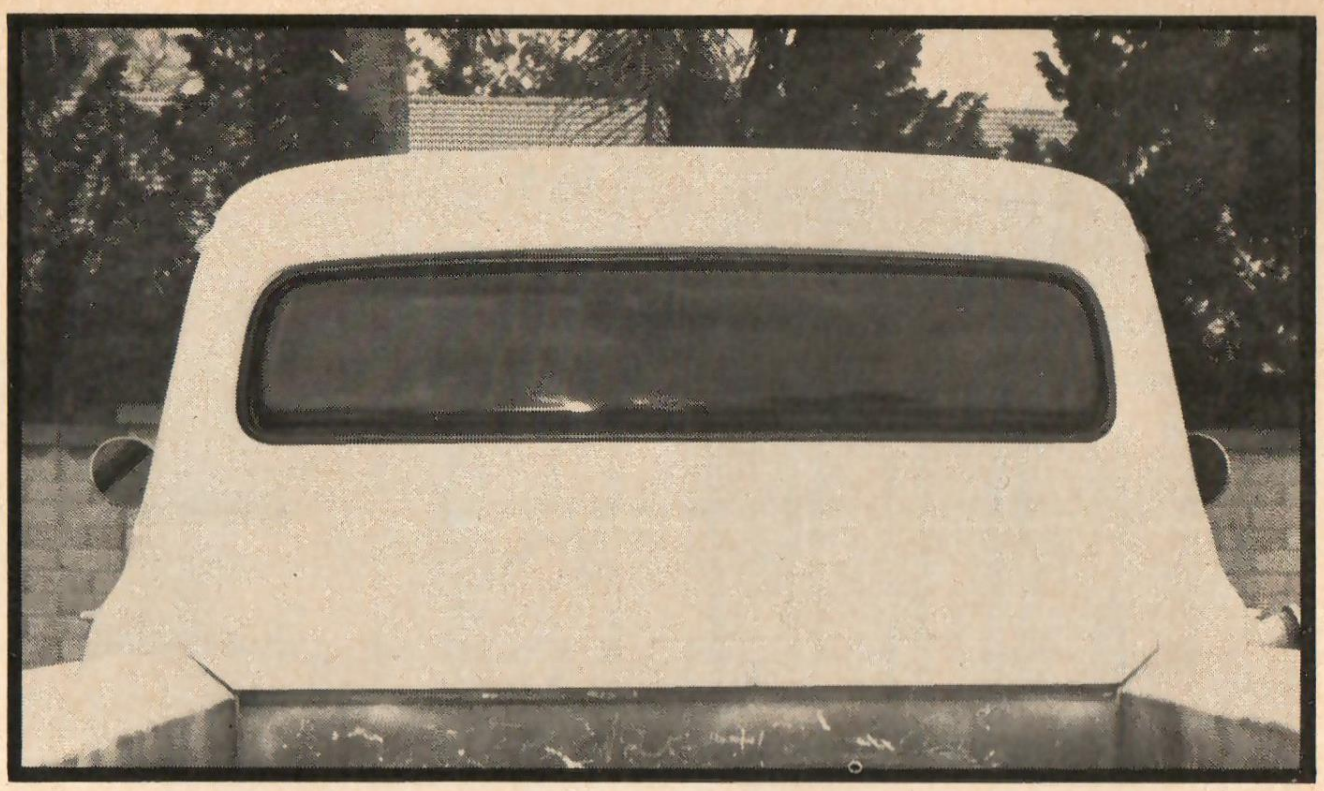
by Frank Oddo

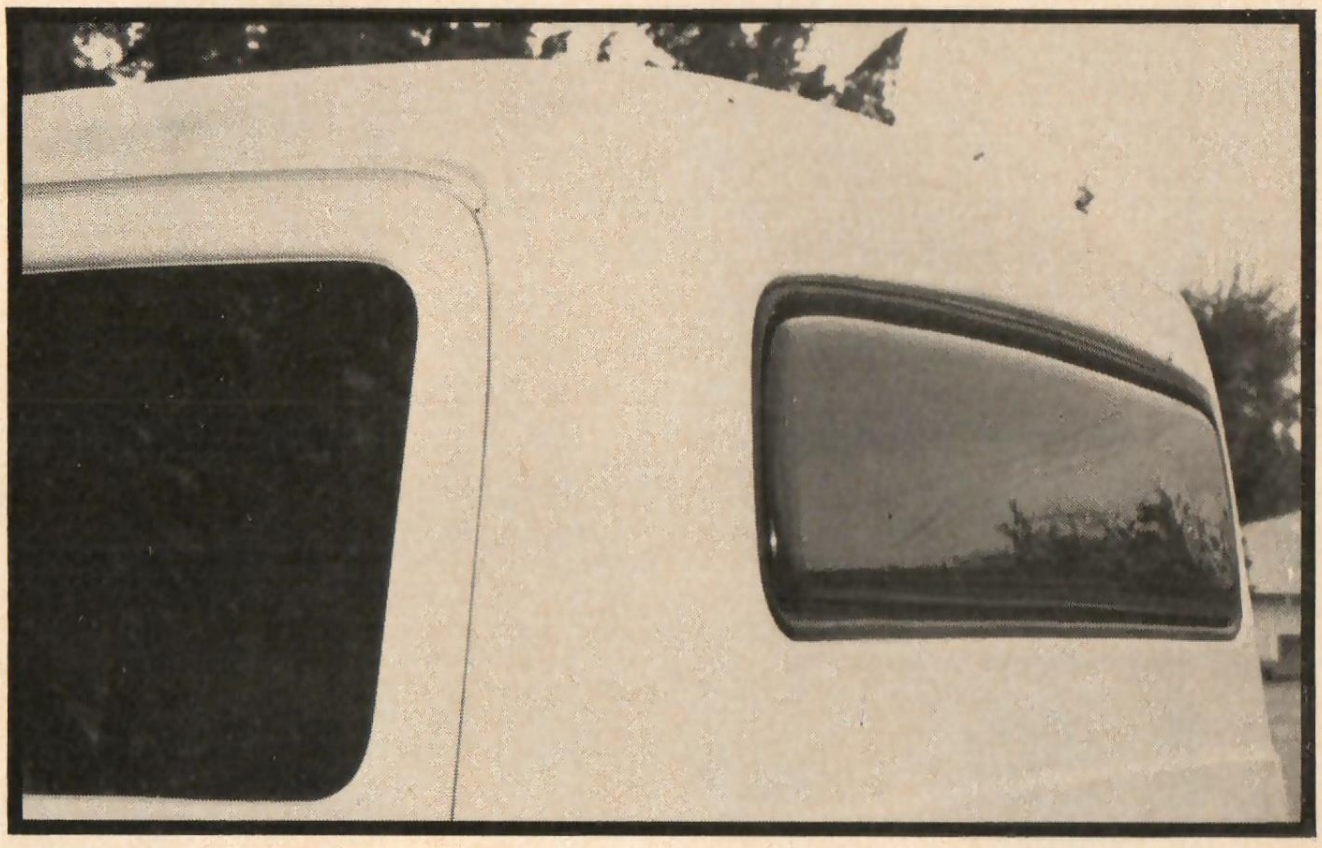
They're always looking for something new. These truckers, I mean. They're *always* looking for something new . . . and a little different. Wild paint? Of course. Fancy interior? Sure. Big motor? Naturally. Trick suspension? If you got the bucks.

Cut the sheet metal — like in "Chop, Channel and Section?"

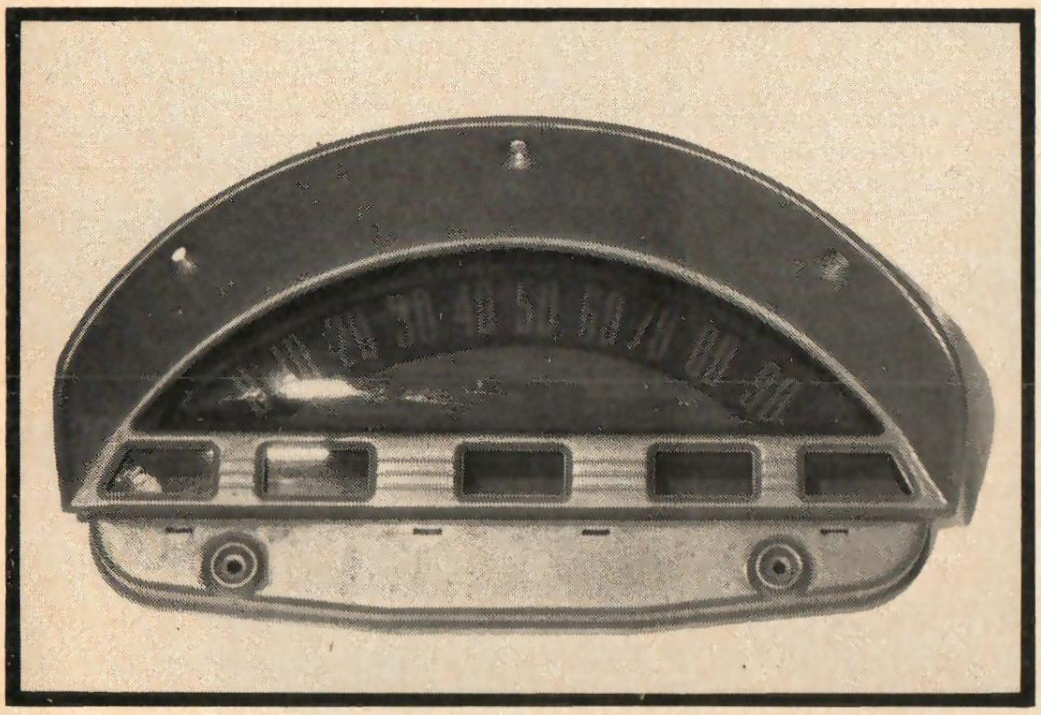
No way!

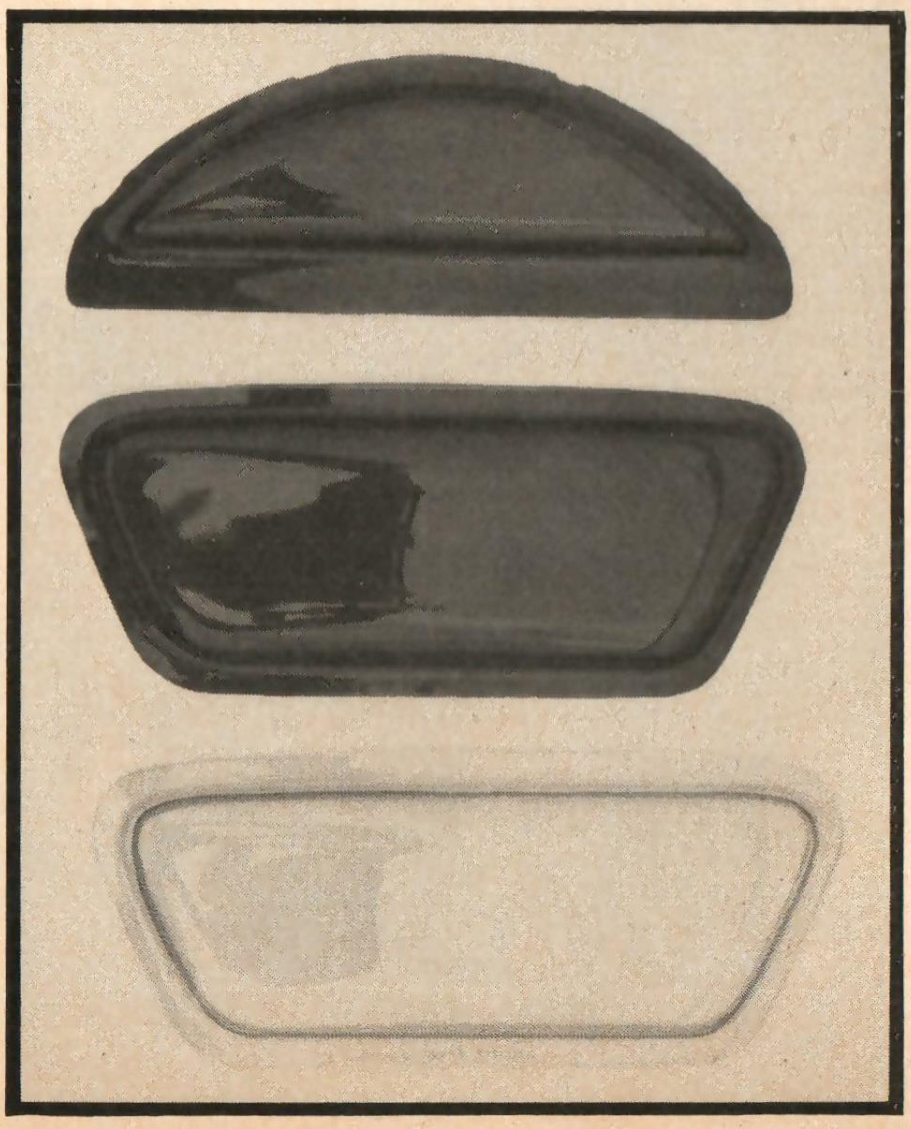
Few hardy souls dare alter the basic lines of the F-100. The truck is just too handsome the way it is. Besides, once the torch is put to the body, you're way past the point of no return. No return on your investment, that is, unless you can find a buyer who thinks exactly as you do. So our guys always have an eye open for something new they can do to their haulers . . . without getting radical or bucks up. That's why when Charlie Lowence casually mentioned that he and the boys down at Specialized Auto, 1075 N. Harbor Blvd., Anaheim, CA were putting a different kind of rear window in F-100's, we just had to take a gander for ourselves. Here's what we saw.





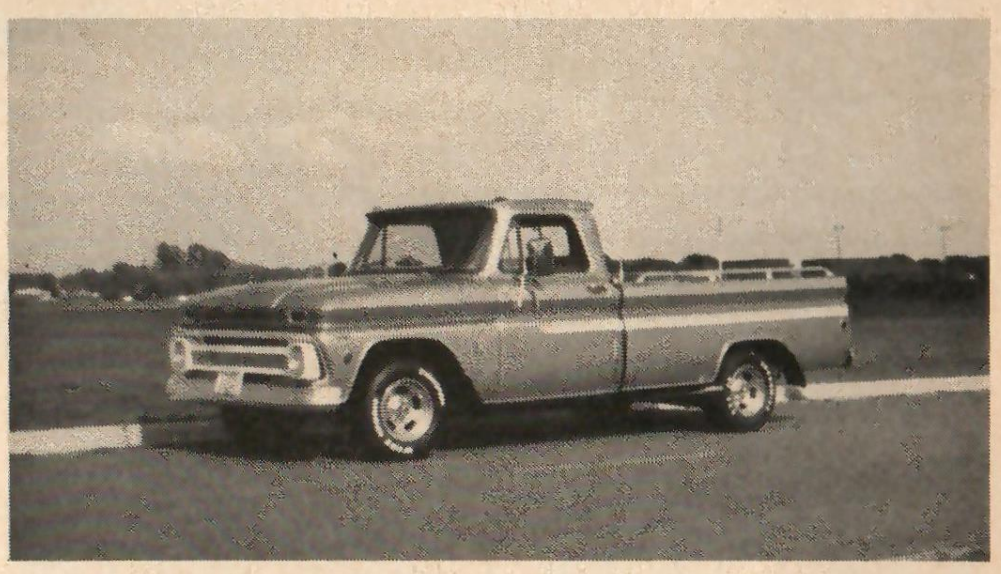
ABOVE & RIGHT — Voila! The window is thusly installed. And, it really is as simple as it looks. Because the pane is shatterproof plastic, it is far less like to break during installation than regular Herculite glass. By the way, use new rubber moldings for best results. (Available through So-Cal Custom Pick-Ups and Panels.)





ABOVE & RIGHT — Finally we thought you ought to know that the manufacturer, Windows By Gilbert also produces these instrument cluster Plexiglas bubbles for the 1953-56 F-100's. They sell for $10.

READER'S RIDES



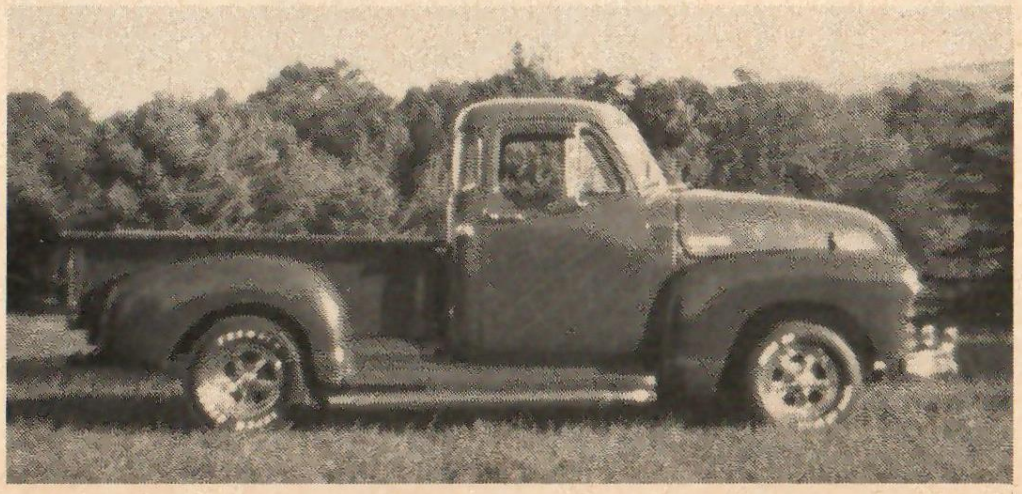
Mike Kanne of Austin, Minnesota drives around in his redone (was once totaled) '64 Chevy Fleetside with stock six and standard trans. Wheels are Rockets with G60's in the rear, G70's in front.

EDITOR'S NOTE: If you've been wondering how to get a picture of your truck in a magazine, here's the perfect opportunity. We receive many inquiries about this, so we have devoted two pages for the Readers Rides. All we need is a good snapshot or two of your vehicle, and a brief description. Send your photos and info to Readers Rides, **TRUCKIN' Magazine, 2145 W. La Palma Ave., Anaheim, CA 92801.**

Phil Martinez (Richmond, CA) sent in this photo of his dad's (Ross) daily driver, a '72 Chevy stepside. It still has original paint, but is accented with tonneau, sidepipes, custom wheels.

ABOVE—From Romoland, CA is a nicely done '56 F-100, owned by Don Fuller. He spent two grand so far and completed it after nine months work. Features redone bed, leather interior, new paint.

ABOVE—This is what Don Fuller's truck started out as. As you can see at left, the finished product is outstanding.

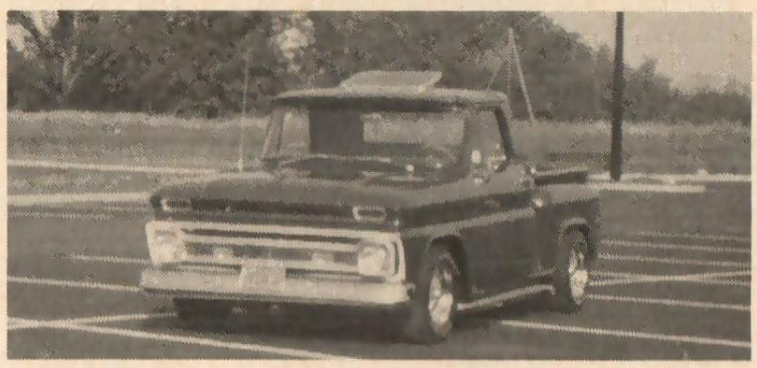


ABOVE—Barry Poe, Springfield, Missouri, is the proud owner of this '54 Chevy: US mags, overhead console, etc.

LEFT—Another sharp early hauler is Walter Fedorishen's red '52 Chevy from Palmerton, Pennsylvania.

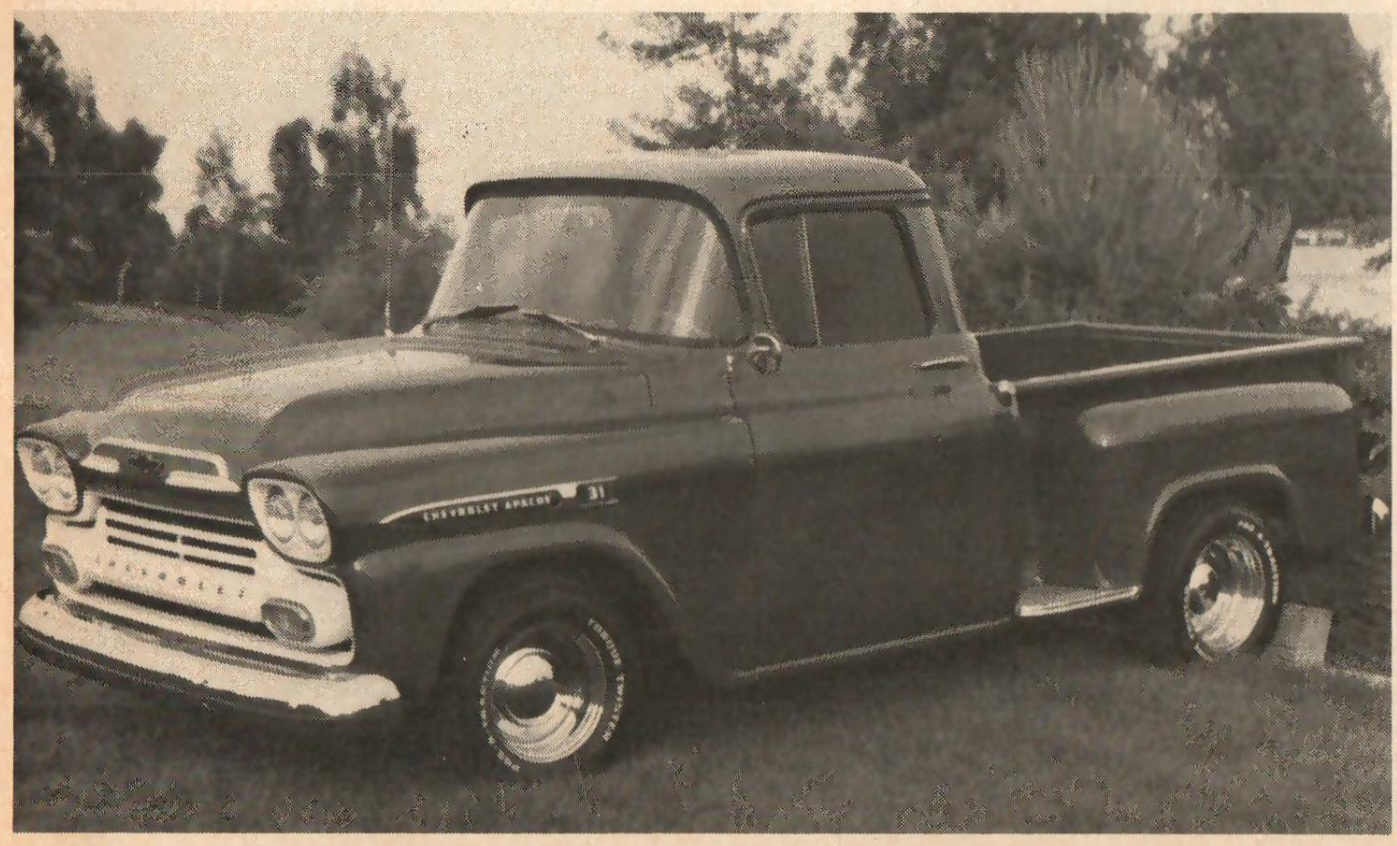
ABOVE—This '56 big window has Jag front and rear suspension, disc brakes, bright red paint. The crew at Arly's in Orland, CA did many of the mods.

ABOVE—Fixed up mini-trucks are sprouting up all over the place. This '75 Datsun belongs to Steve Demos of La Habra, CA. It's red with yellow flames and blue striping. Other tricks include red bubble rear window, Stull grille, Cragar mags, Mickey Thompson tread.



ABOVE—From Mollala, Oregon is John Cannard's '64 Stepside. Custom additions are sunroof, Appliance wires with Goodyears, tuck 'n' roll interior.

LEFT—This '65 F-100 is powered by a hi-po 289; trans is C-4. It's brown, striped, and rides on Firestone rubber. Owner: Mr. Toad, Brandon, Florida.



ABOVE—Tom Jones (Torrance, CA) did a real nice job on his '55 F-100. Features two-tone gold and brown paint, tilt wheel, power brakes and steering, radials on Western wheels, 430 Lincoln with Cruisomatic, plush interior.

ABOVE LEFT—A 292 Y block with 3-speed column shift powers this '59 F-100 owned by Joe Gill of Burton, Michigan. A high schooler, Joe is still working on his flamed hauler; he's saving for mags.

LEFT—John Hrynkiewicz of West Covina, CA is building this super sano '59 stepside for his brother Dan in Oregon. Flawless body is stock, with red paint, chrome wheels with baby moons, tinted windows. Drivetrain: 235 six, 3-speed.

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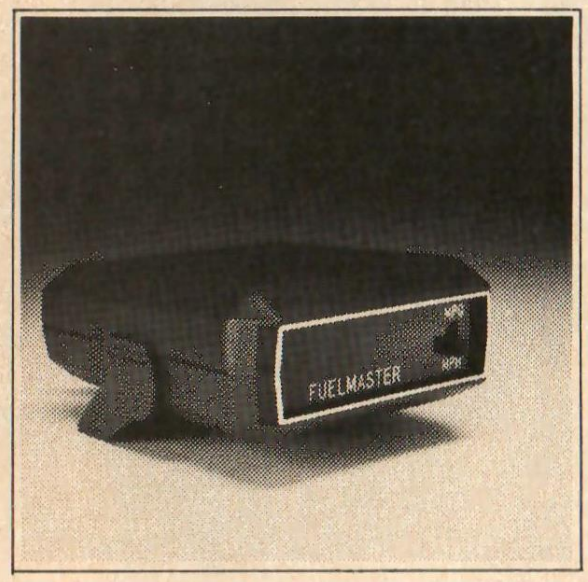

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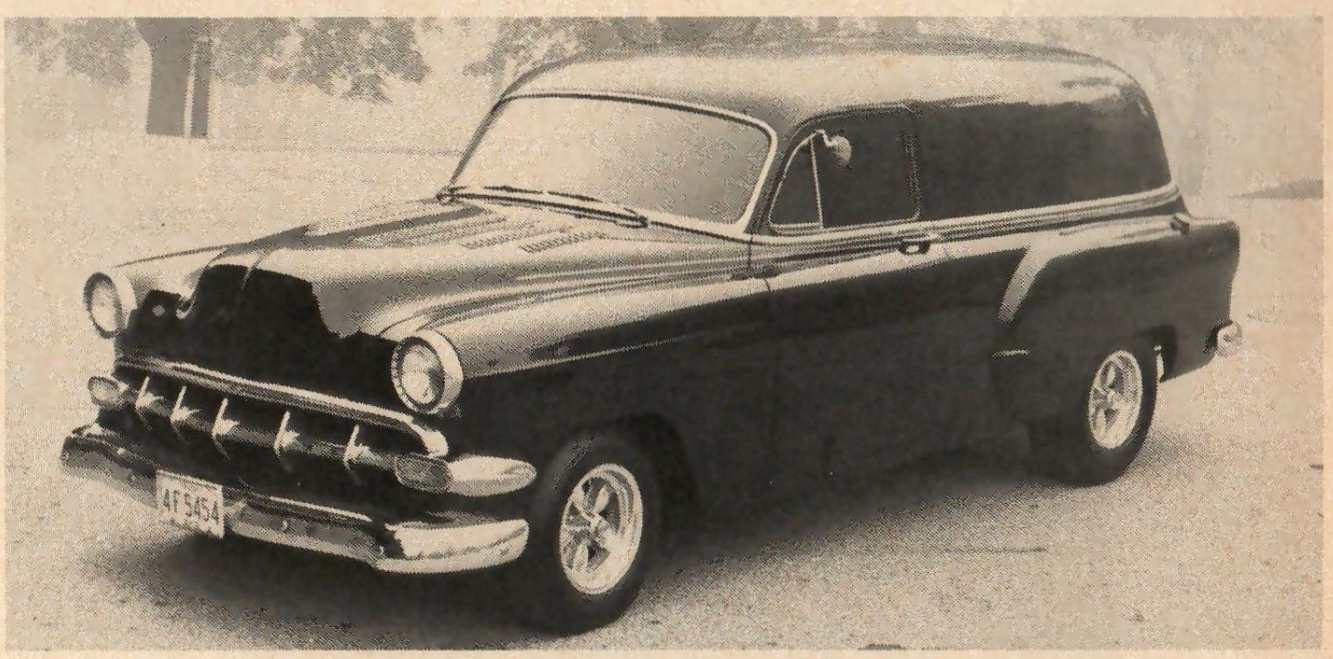
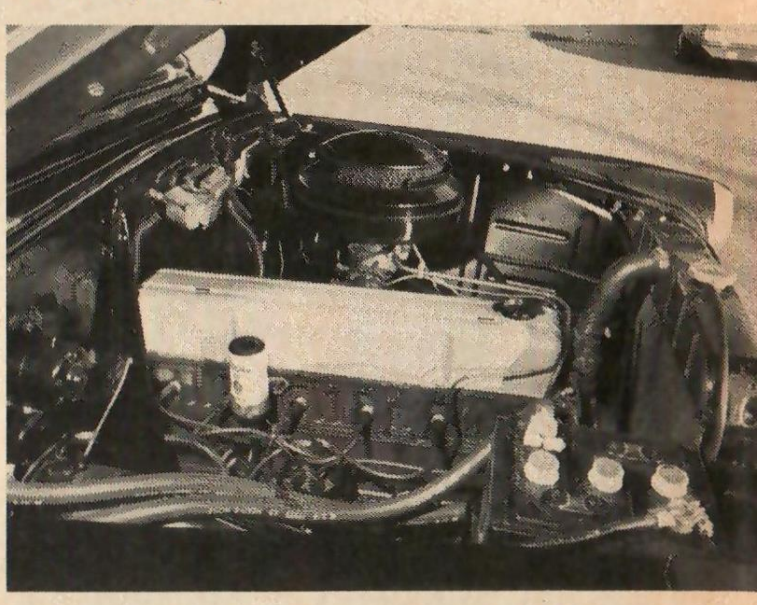


John Minogue's '54 Chevy sedan delivery doesn't look much like a $600 "beater" any more. The body was stripped to bare metal before black lacquering.

It's hard for me to think of a '54 Chevy as an old car. I mean, it doesn't even have *fenders* (you know . . . fenders that *unbolt,* like a model A's or a Forty Ford's). But the '54's look-alike kid sister, the '53, turns twenty five years old this year — and that makes them vintage in most auto-enthusiasts' books.

I tend to think of the 1949 through 1954 Chevies as a group — especially the sedan deliveries. They all share the same simple, smooth, slightly rounded lines, they all use the same suspension and drivetrain (though, with the introduction of their first automatic — the infamous "slip-n-slide" Powerglide — Chevy finally updated the babbit-pounder 216 OHV six to a far superior full-oiling 235), but best of all for us old car collectors this group of old Chevies remains plentiful and cheap. You know the story about prices on '55-'57 Chevies (which goes for deliveries as well as hardtops), and the '58 and newer versions, well, I just can't consider them old cars at all.

I have discussed '49-'54 sedan deliveries in this column before, and I still feel they are a product well worth pushing (make that Chevies '49-'54, Fords '52-'56 . . . for some reason Ford skipped '49-'51 with their delivery model). These models are very plentiful for prices in the $0-$500 range (hard to beat that!), both the Fords and Chevies of this period offer "modern" independent front suspension with replaceable tube shocks (unlike the pre-49 Chevies) and dual parallel rear leaf springs so that the installation of a newer driveline is fairly simple. Since the Chevies all came with six cylinders, swapping a V-8 into the narrow engine compartment is

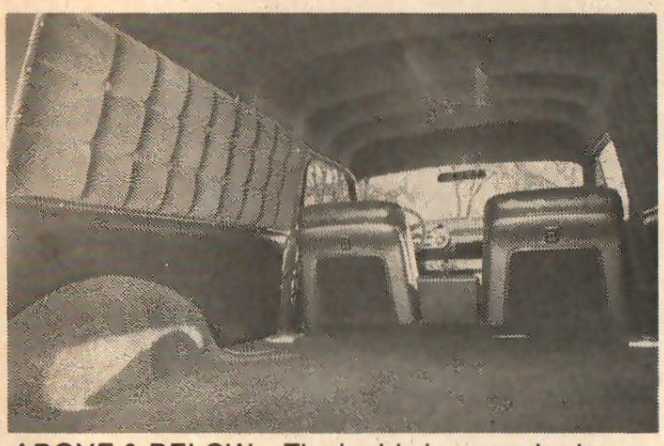


John decided to leave the rebuilt and reliable stovebolt in place (up through '62 versions will bolt in). Hood was filled, peaked, and louvered.

a little tight . . . but has been done millions of times. Also on the pre-55 Chevies the "torque tube" closed driveshaft/differential means you have to replace everything (trans, driveshaft, rear end) if you want to swap in a V-8. But the original components couldn't take the power of anything bigger than a 283 anyway. On the other hand, since Chevy continued to build the same six cylinder engine through 1962, you can make a really economical runner by bolting one of these later stovebolts (freshened up, of course, with readily available new parts) to the original tranny.

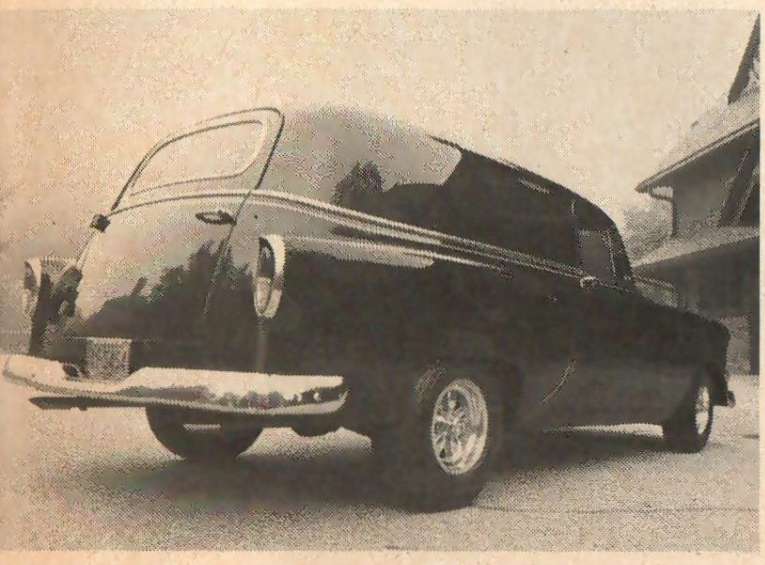
To give you a graphic example of just such a combination, I present John Minogue's beautiful black '54. Though John lives in Springfield, Ohio, where vehicles of this type are usually a little rusty by now, he traveled out to Palo Alto, California, to pick up this ex-delivery truck (complete with freshly

by Pat Ganahl



ABOVE & BELOW—The inside is pure plush with a '69 Toronado power seat, Vega GT wheel, charcoal painted trim, and luscious scarlet velvet and wine vinyl upholstery with '76 Cad red cut pile carpeting.

rebuilt engine) for $600. After a thorough rebuilding of the car — including stripping to the bare metal, block sanding, a super black lacquer paint job, and a really plush wine-velvet interior — John still has less than $2500 invested in the delivery. It's a real eye-catcher (though still very practical to drive) on the streets, it would hold its own in any show, and it's something just a little different from all the rest. Actually what you've got with a fixed up sedan delivery of this vintage, as John Minogue's so well demonstrates, is a happy blend of old car looks and style with the comforts and class of a sharp late-model custom van. A good combination.



Reflections show the quality of the body and paint. Two tone grey pinstriping makes subtle accents, and the windows were also tinted smoke grey. Polished 200-S American mags add a little sparkle.

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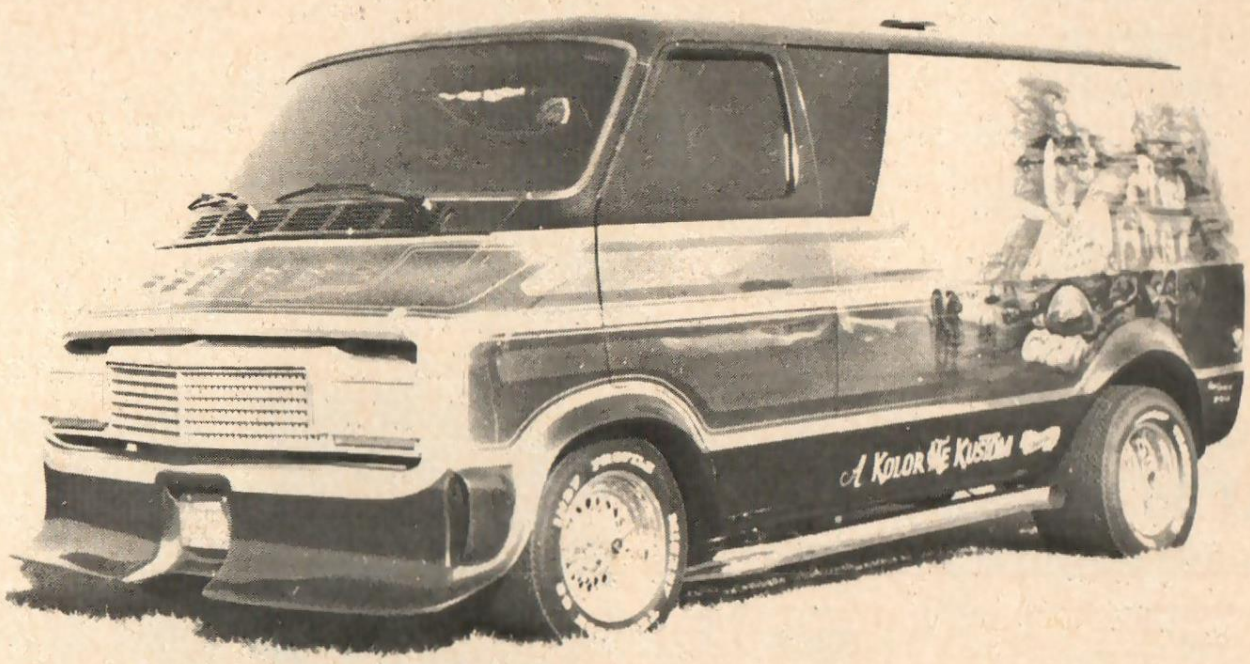

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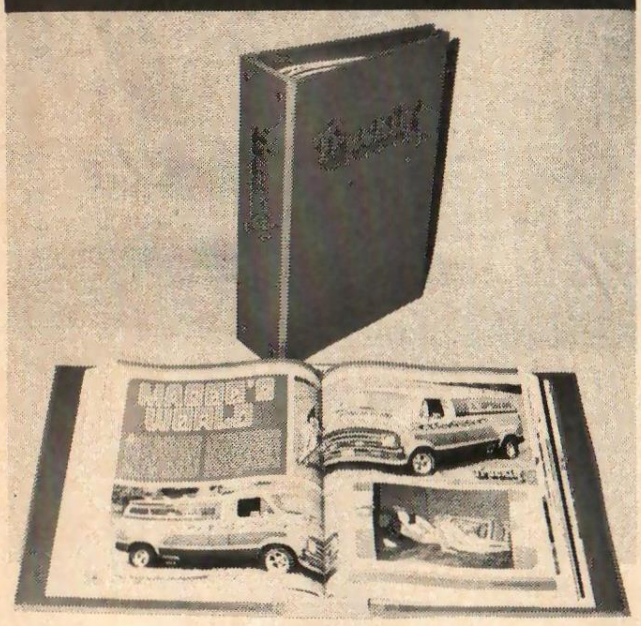

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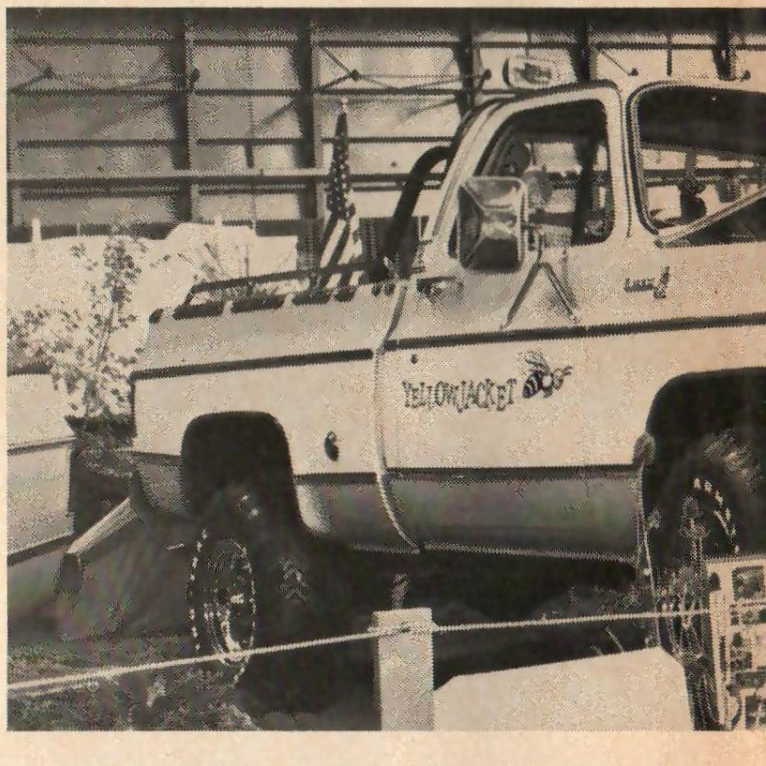
by Steve Coonan

4X4'S AT THE SHOWS

We all have preconceived notions of what we think a certain type of custom car or truck should look like. For instance, many of us associate a wild van with muraled paint and a super plush interior, or invision a stepside cruiser down on the ground with frenched taillights and maybe a chopped top. Almost always, we picture 4x4's as big rugged trucks with the emphasis on functional components rather than aesthetic add-ons. But that doesn't mean four wheeler owners totally disregard the looks of their machines.

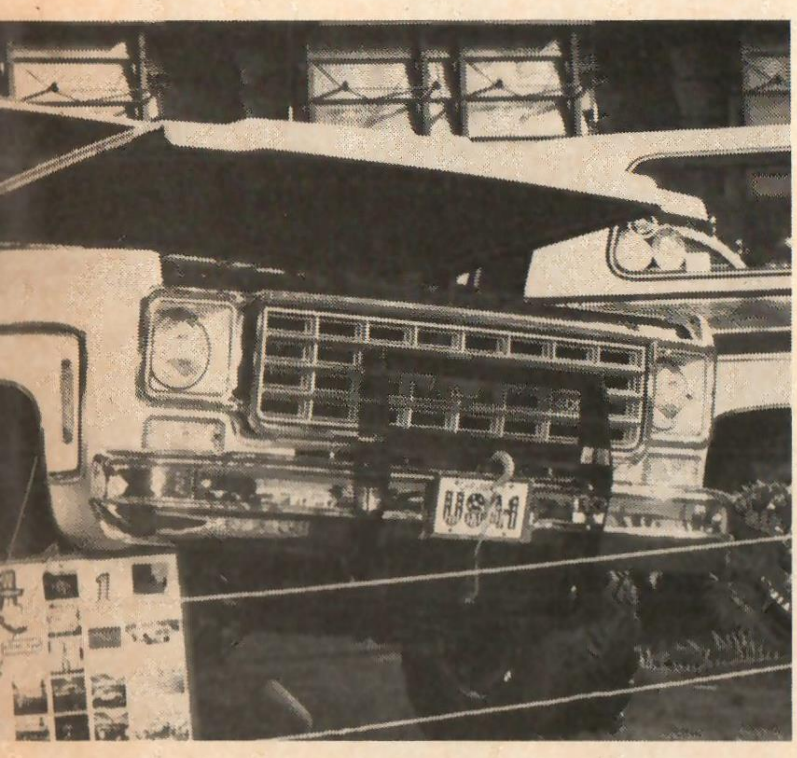


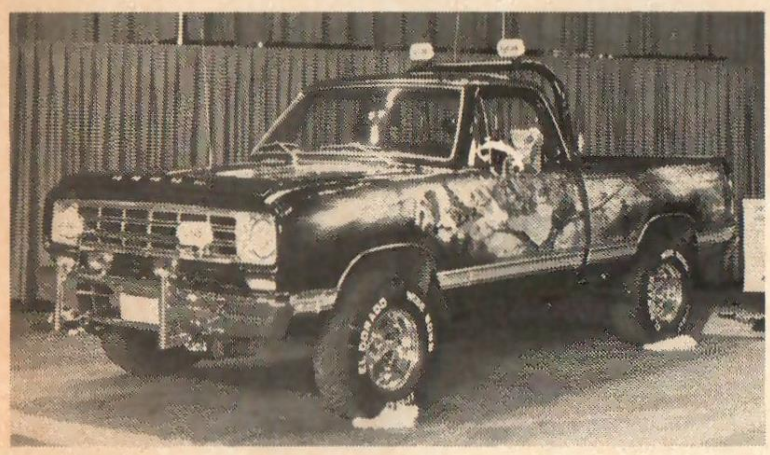
In fact, some of the wilder 4x4's even make it to the car shows. Over the last couple of show seasons, we've noticed a sharp increase in the number of off-road oriented entrants in shows. The trend doesn't appear to be linked to one area or region either. Here in Southern California, in Seattle, Washington, Kansas City, Missouri, and on the eastcoast, we've seen clean four wheelers take home some real nice trophies. It's no fluke, the off-roaders are into the show and shine routine too.

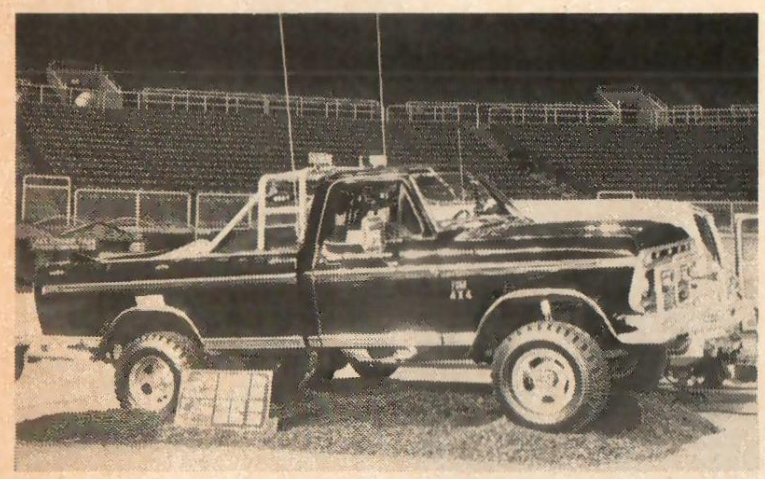
The majority of 4x4 trucks we saw in the shows were a combination of off-road accessories and concourse style detailing. Steel spoke wheels, grille

guards, push bars, and roll bars were common, but many times featured the addition of chrome plating. Undercarriages received axle trusses and skid plates along with lots of shiny paint and dress-up goodies. Paint schemes ranged from subtle to outlandish, with pinstriping and even murals coming on strong.

As total packages, the 4x4's entered in the shows were really neat. They were good looking for sure, but the owners hadn't gone so far as to make them unsuitable for what they were originally intended, off-roading. Granted, a thirty







coat candy apple job, or completely chromed differentials front and rear would win shows but would be wasted after only a short period of hard use. But the trucks we saw at all the shows proved that an off-road truck doesn't have to be ugly to be useful or impractical to win trophies.

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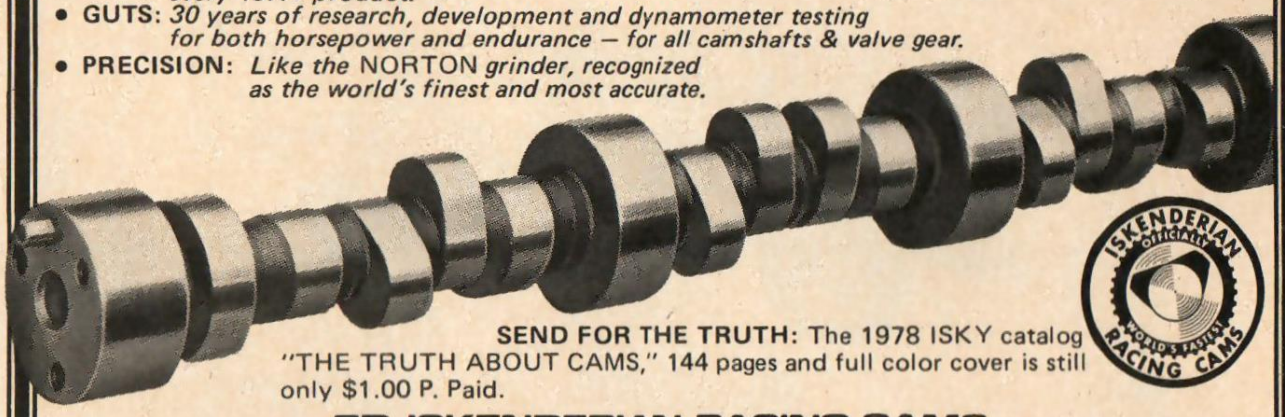

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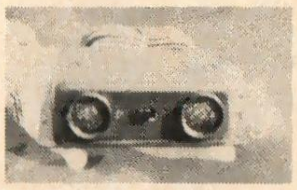

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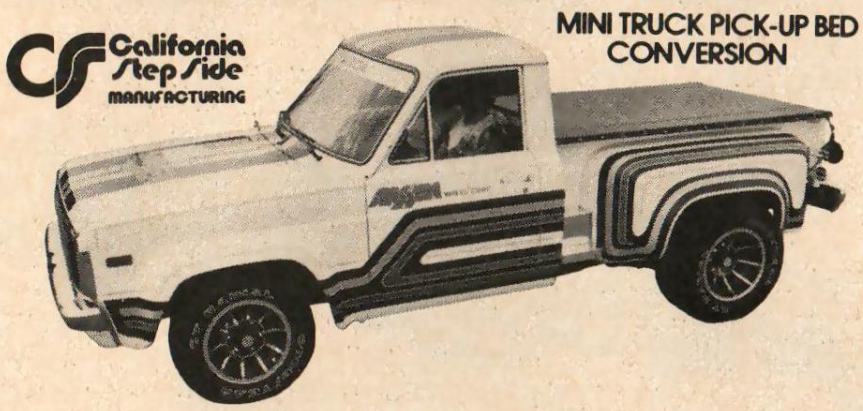

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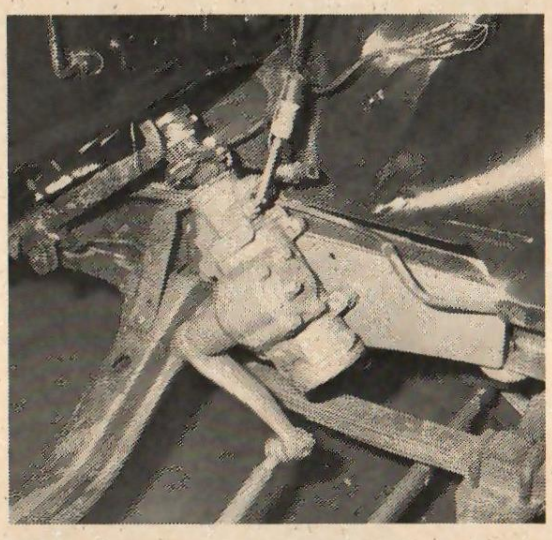

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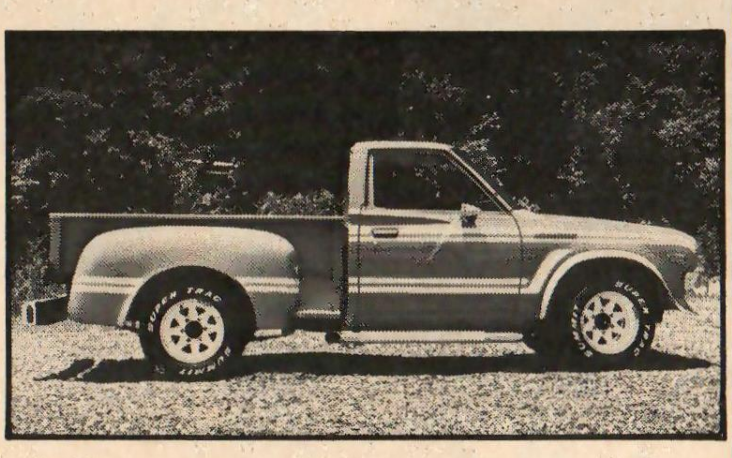

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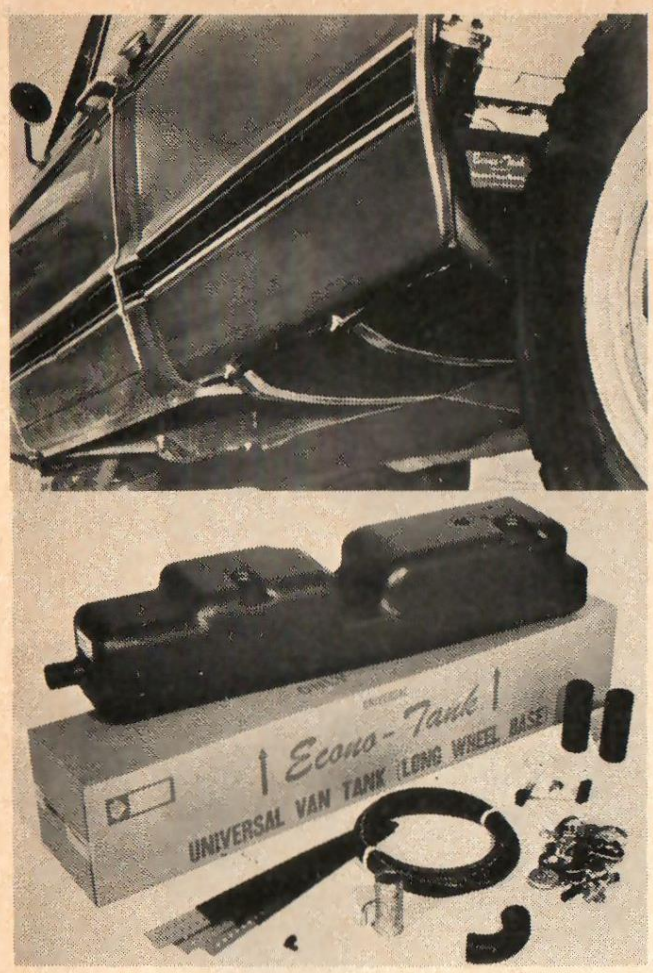

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Available with either single or dual (pick-ups only) tanks, each Econo-tank kit has all the materials necessary for quick installation (one hour or less) on all American long wheel base pick-ups and both long and short wheel base vans. Dual tanks increase fuel capacity by an additional 40 gallons. Single tanks allow an additional capacity of 15 to 32 gallons depending on the model of truck or van.

Econo-tank requires only simple tools to install, eliminating the need for body work or holes cut in the vehicle since the tank is strapped under the rear fender well, hidden from view, providing a bonus of increased rear wheel traction with no loss of cargo space. A convenient filler pipe rests snuggly against the forward edge of the wheel well for easy refueling.

A switching valve installed inside the vehicle near the driver seat permits changing the fuel feed from the empty tank to the Econo-tank without stopping, and a fuel gauge sending unit (included on all but Series 1000 kits) gives an accurate reading on the gasoline supply. From RPM Incorporated, P.O. Box 7936, Dept T, Waco, Texas 76710.

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MINI TRUCK PICK-UP BED CONVERSION

It's an all steel bed, constructed with corrugated steel floor, finished ready for installation. Packages start at $495.00 and include heavy duty steel tail gate, stainless gate latches, hinge, formed steel steps (chrome optional), steel mounting supports, reinforced fiberglass fenders, hardware and instructions.

These tough units are specifically engineered for Courier, Datsun, L.U.V., Toyota and Mazda mini pick-ups. Flared fenders, bumpers, Lighting packages and Tonneau covers are also available to detail your heavy hauler.

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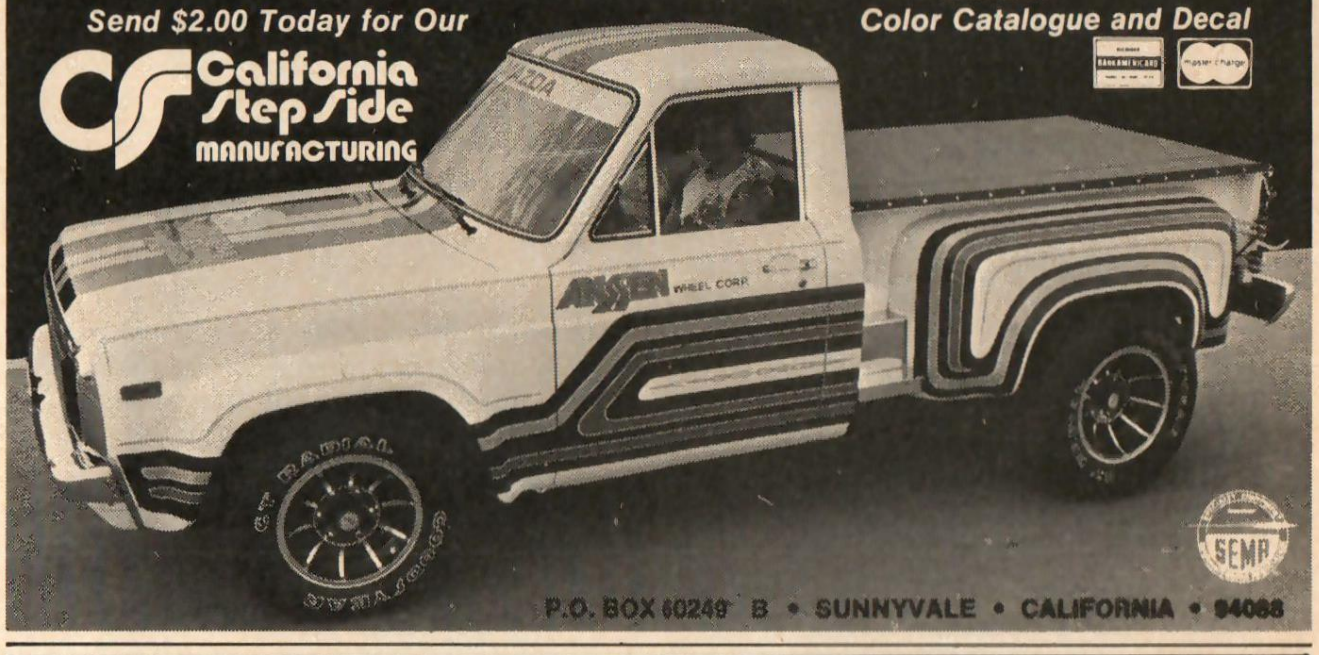

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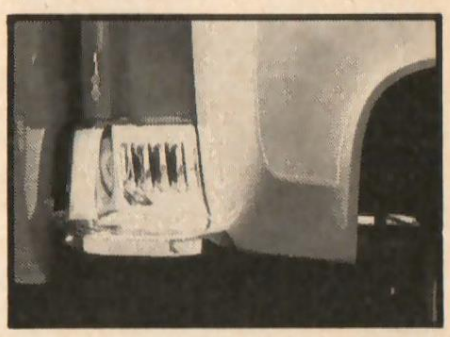

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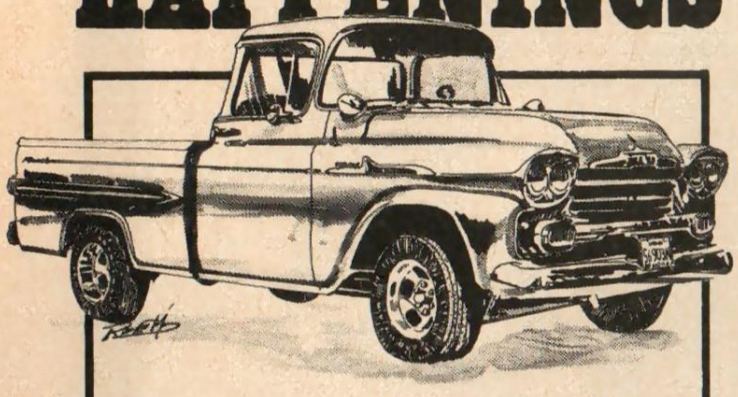
HAPPENINGS HAPPENINGS



JANUARY 14, 15 — Custom Car Show, Carolina Coliseum, Columbia, SC. Write Custom Car Shows, P.O. Box 6025, Lancaster, PA 17603, (717) 394-6298.

JANUARY 20-21 — International Championship Auto Show, Lubbock, Texas. Contact Pacific Promotions, P.O. Box 1518, Canoga Park, CA 91304.

JANUARY 25-29 — Oakland Roadster Show, Oakland Coliseum, Oakland, Ca. For info write Starbird Productions, 504 SE Louis Blvd., Mulvane, Kansas 67110.

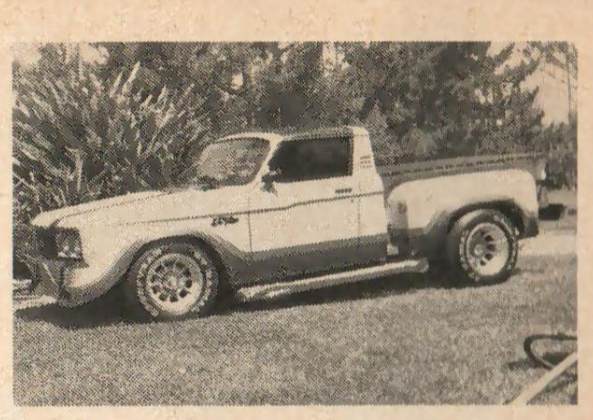
JANUARY 27-29 — 7th Annual Custom Car, Truck, and Rod Show, Civic Auditorium, Bakersfield, CA. For more information, contact Canning Show headquarters, P.O. Box 400, Maywood, CA 90270, (213) 588-4551.

JANUARY 29 — Rainbow Truckers Van Club of Torrance presents "End of the Rainbow #1" rally, van and mini truck show. For more info, contact Rainbow Truckers, P.O. Box 6861, Torrance, CA 90504.

FEBRUARY 3-5 — 3rd Annual Custom Car, Truck, and Rod Show, Ventura Fairgrounds, Ventura, CA. Canning Show Headquarters, P.O. Box 400, Maywood, CA 90720, (213) 588-4551.

FEBRUARY 10-12 — 2nd Annual Valentine Van Show, Illinois, write or call Flatland Vans, c/o Allen Mansfield, 2202½ Brownfield Road, Urbana, Illinois 61801, (217) 367-5790.

FEBRUARY 17-19 — National Rod and Custom Show, Myriad, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. Starbird Productions, 504 SE Louis Blvd., Mulvane, Kansas 67110.



FEBRUARY 25-26 — 9th Annual Rod and Custom Show, Youth Center Building (Jones County Fairgrounds), Monticello, Iowa. For info, contact Ralph or Galen Muller, 853 Southhaven Drive, Monticello, Iowa 52310, (319) 465-5119 or (319) 465-5380.

APRIL 7-9 — 2nd Annual Tri-State Van and 4WD Show, Suffern, NY. For info: Tri-State Van and 4WD Show, 5 Quaker Lane, Westport, CT 06880, (203) 227-7677.

APRIL 11-16 — Florida's Van Spring '78 Truck-in — Yogi Bear's I-4 Jellystone Park. For more info, write Florida's Van Spring '78, P.O. Box 11016, St. Petersburg, Florida 33733.

HAPPENINGS HAPPENINGS

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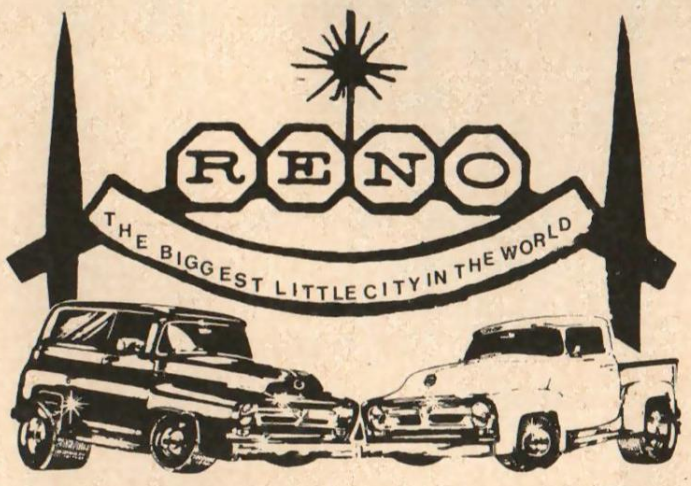

Dash Plaque

Show & Shine

Raffle

APRIL 21, 22 & 23

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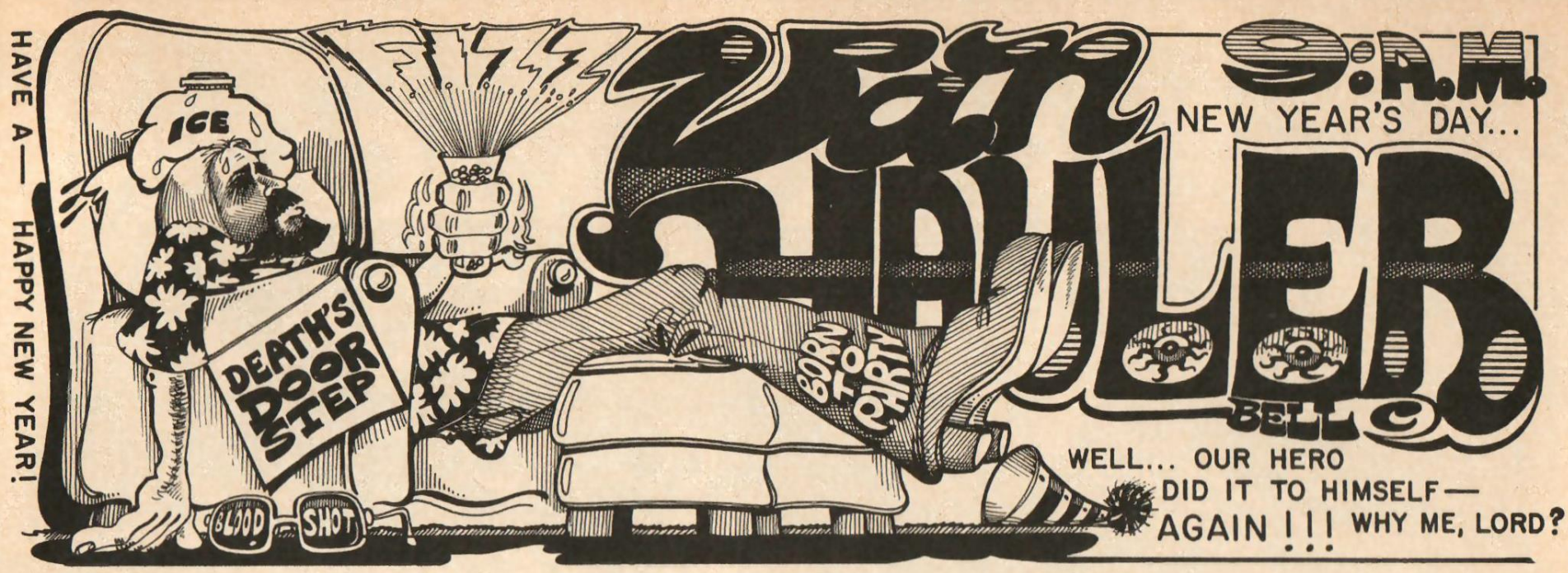
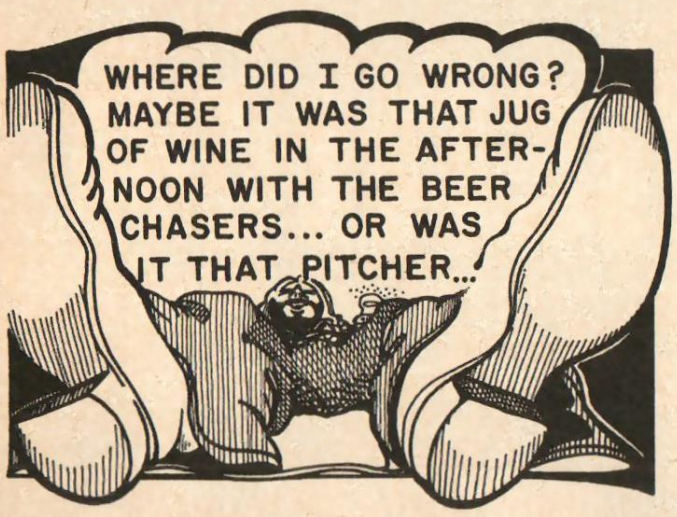
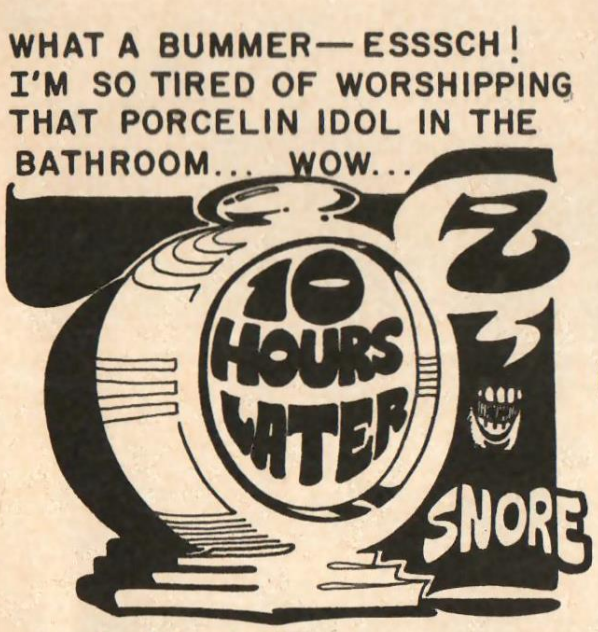
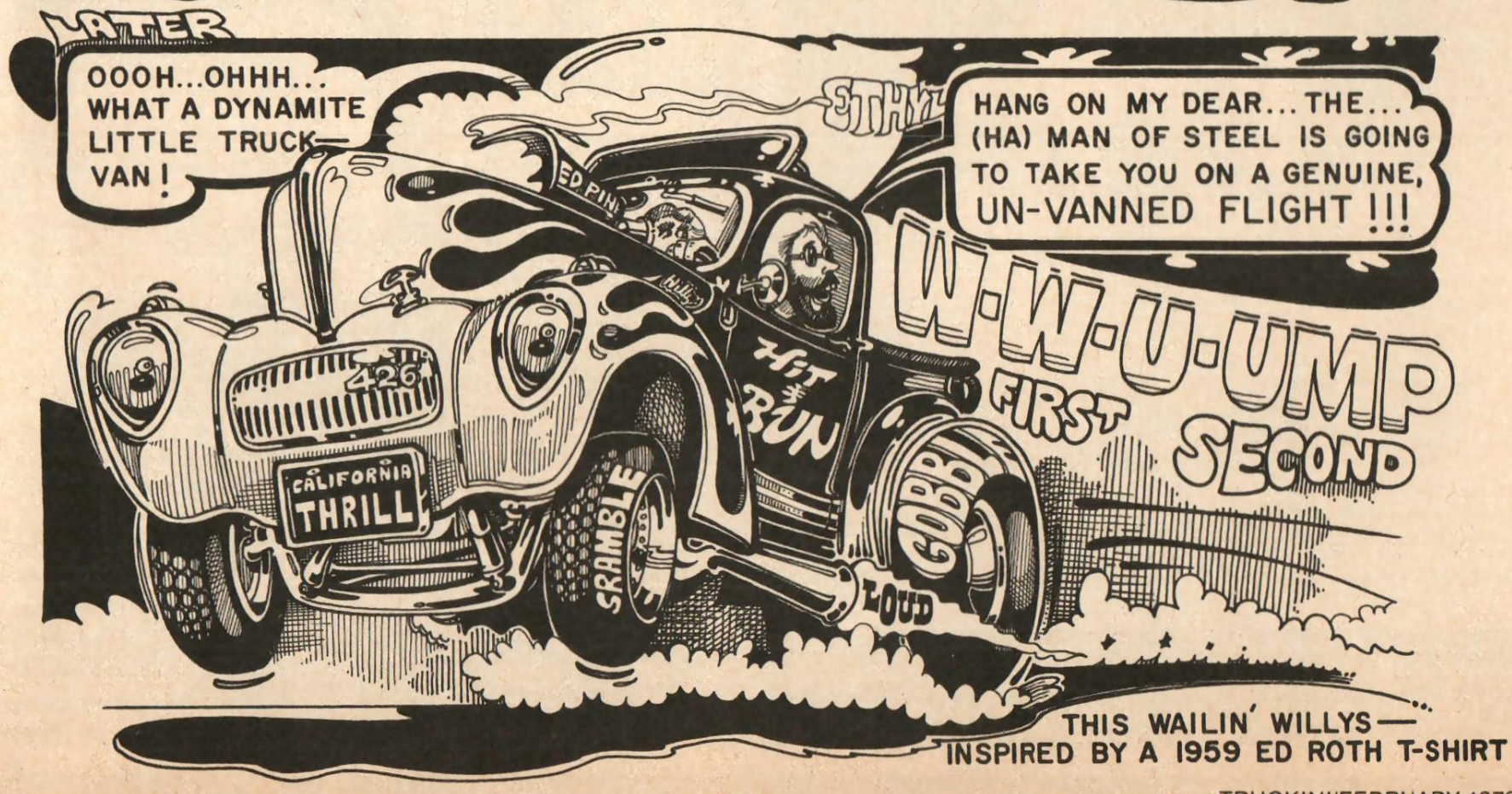
contact: howard montgomery-936 ralston st, reno, nevada 89503-702/323-4698

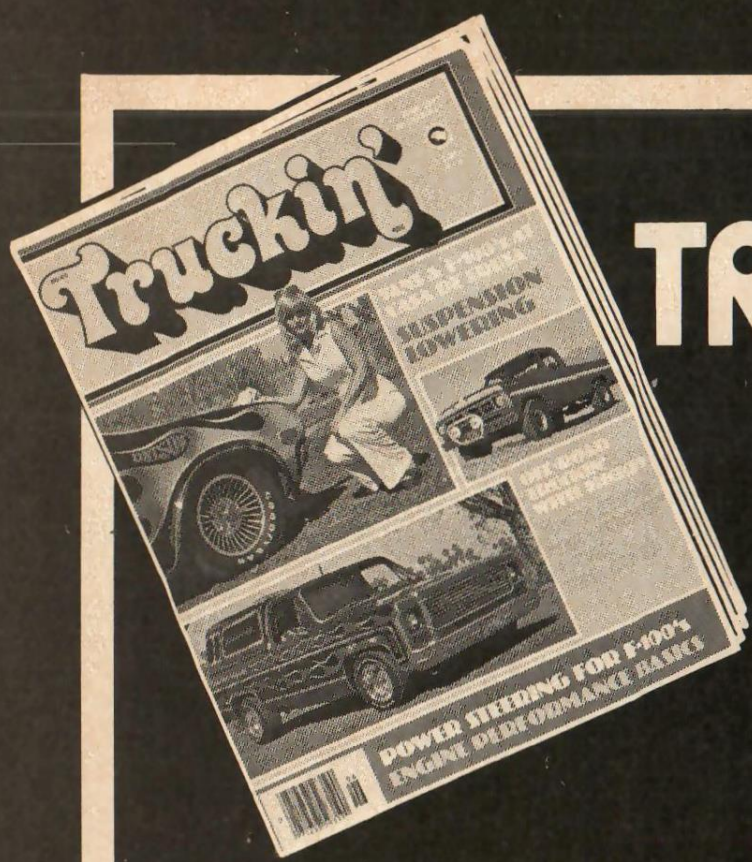








THIS WAILIN' WILLYS— INSPIRED BY A 1959 ED ROTH T-SHIRT



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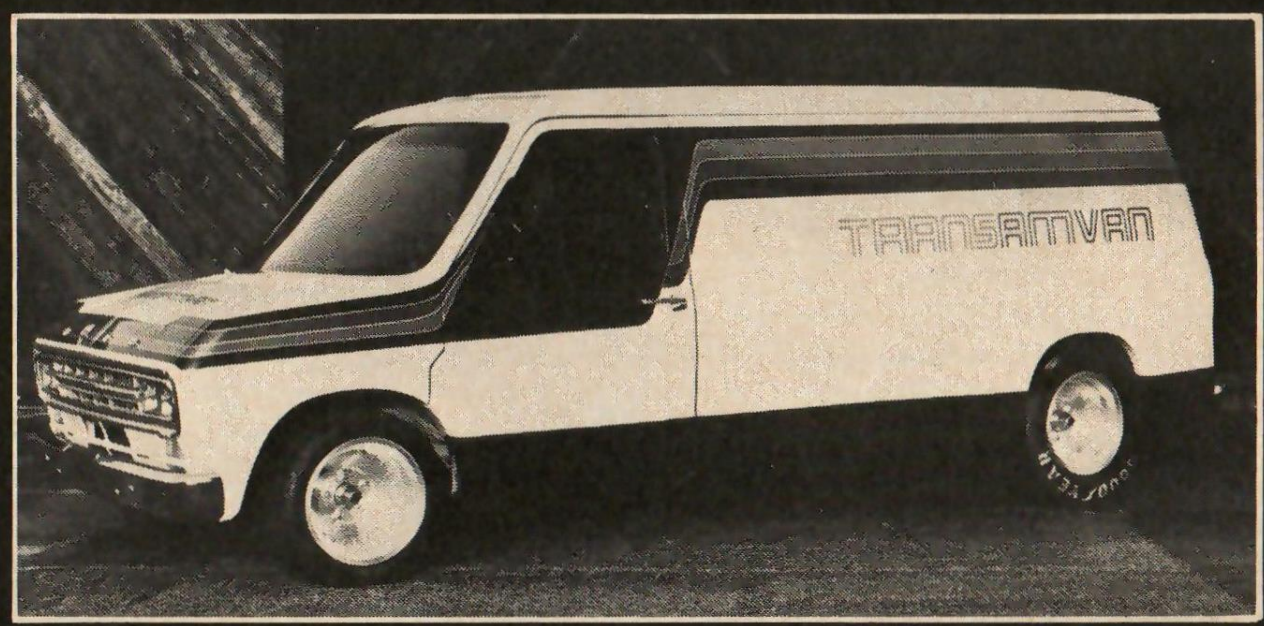

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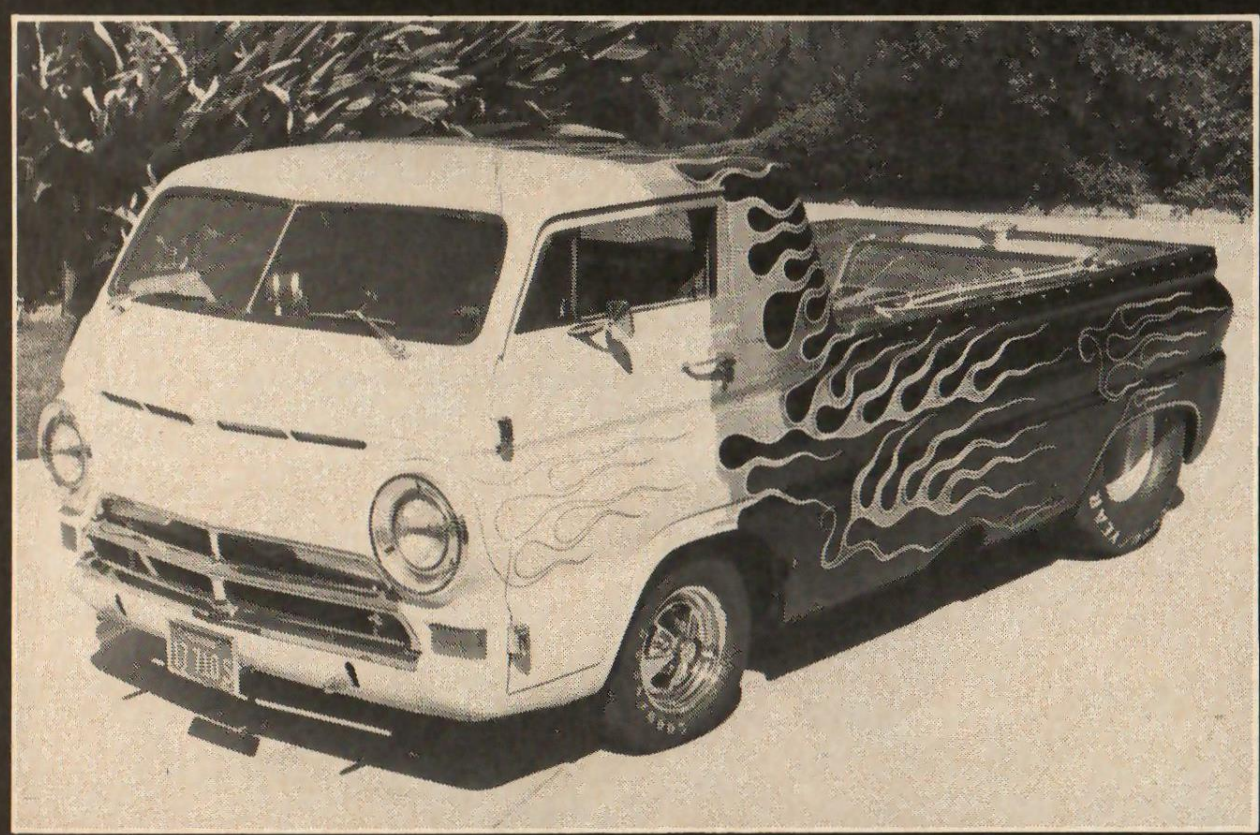

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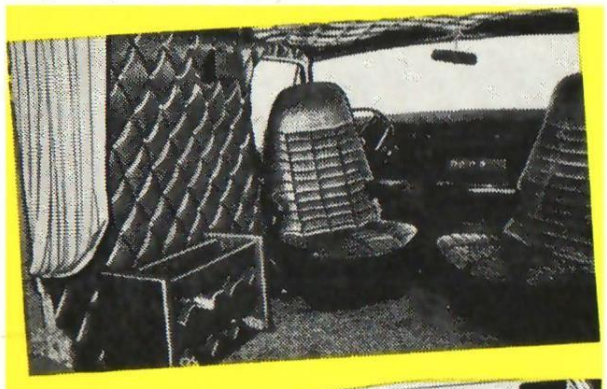

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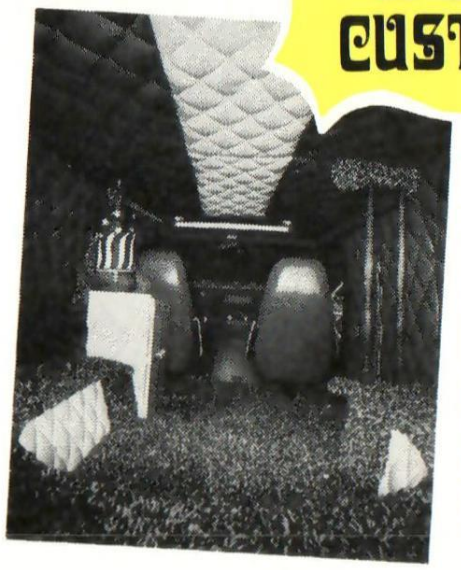
VAN CUSTOMIZING



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